

# THE STORY OF LEITH

JOHN RUSSELL

STIGILLUM OPPIDI DE LEITH



PERSEVERE



To

Mr & Mrs Robb

with the kind regards  
of the Author.

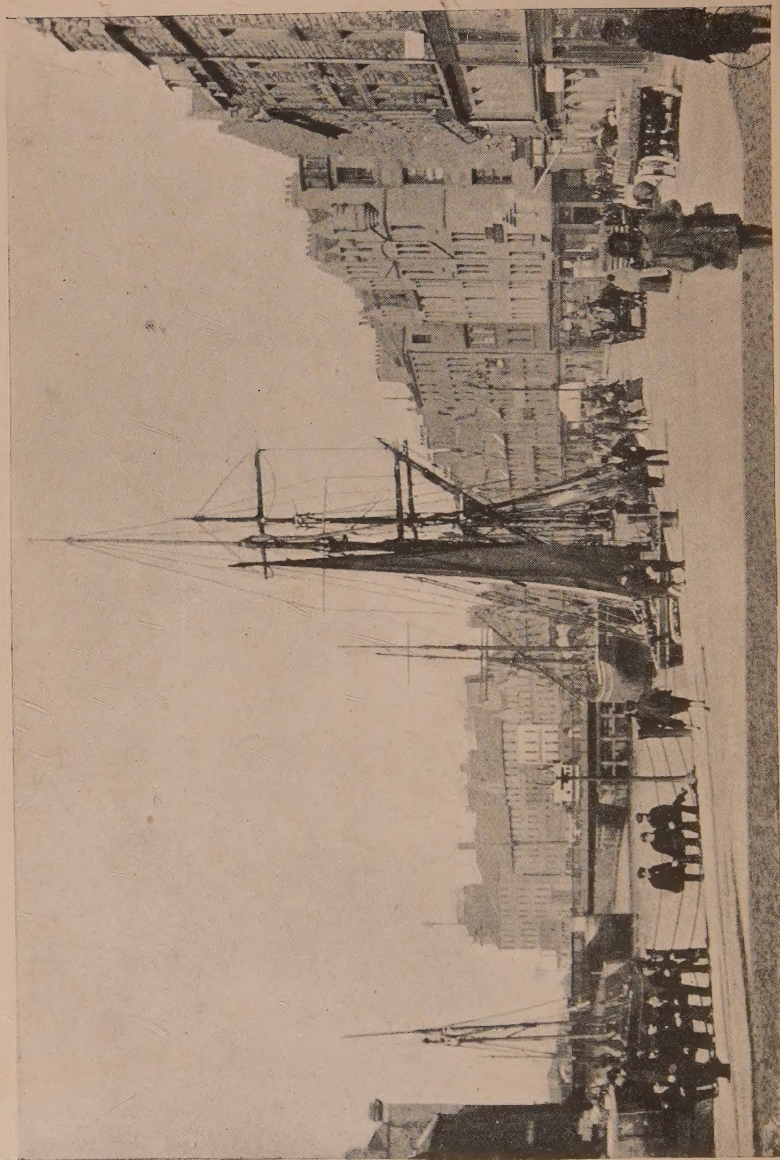
Christmas 1922.







**THE STORY OF LEITH**



J. R. Coltart, Leith.

THE SHORE.

Photo by]

# THE STORY OF LEITH

BY  
JOHN RUSSELL



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TO  
THOMAS FRASER  
AND TO  
ALL THE LEITH BOYS AND GIRLS  
WHOM HE USED TO SEND ON SCHOOL EXCURSIONS  
TO VISIT THE HISTORICAL BUILDINGS AND MONUMENTS  
OF THEIR OWN DISTRICT

## PREFACE

No subject of study ought to be of more interest to natives of Leith, young and old, than the history of their own town and its immediately surrounding district, which in mediæval times formed part of the extensive possessions of the Laird of Restalrig and the Abbot and Canons of Holyrood.

This book, written at the request of the Leith Education Authority as a Reader for the senior classes in their schools, endeavours to tell the story of Leith in such a way as to place it in its proper historic setting, and to show the great part the Port has played in our national history. At the same time it traces the progress and development of the town from its beginnings in the little cluster of huts by the water-side to the great centre of commerce and industry it has become to-day.

So varied and eventful has been the history of Leith that the utmost difficulty has been found in compressing its story within the limits of a single volume. Much has had to be omitted. For instance, the association of the ill-fated James I. with the town has been suggested rather than told, yet none of the Stuarts, save James IV., was more familiarly known in Leith, or did more to encourage its shipbuilding and commerce. Little, too, has been said of the gallant exploits of the Leith sailormen in the long-drawn-out struggle with France after the Union of 1707, and hardly any mention has been made of such old-world legends as the "Twelve O'Clock Coach"—a survival among us, perhaps, of the ancient super-

stition, so familiar to folklorists, of the death-coach that travels along the road in the silence of night and halts ever and again to pick up the souls of the dying. The legend of the giant who is said to have found a grave beneath the Giant's Brae is a modern tale, and has no foundation in local history.

It is hardly possible for one to be equally familiar with every side of Leith's history. I have, therefore, availed myself of the extensive and intimate knowledge of the shipping of the Port possessed by Mr. Malcolm M'Donald, and have to thank him for writing the latter part of Chapter XXX. and the whole of Chapter XXXI. To Mr. Alexander Mackay, B.A., Leith Academy, I am under a very deep debt of obligation for valuable help and suggestion at every stage of the book's progress. I have, on occasion, incorporated paragraphs from articles on Leith and Newhaven contributed by myself to the *Edinburgh Evening News*.

I wish to acknowledge the help of all those who have supplied me with photographs. Exigencies of space have precluded the specific mention of the source of each illustration. The larger number of these are reproduced from photographs by Mr. J. R. Coltart, Dalmeny Street, Leith, who not only placed his collection of views of Leith at my service, but most generously supplied me with photographs of most of the buildings and monuments of historic interest in the town. To Mr. Coltart, and to all others who have contributed to the illustrations, I would express my grateful thanks.

J. R.

LEITH, 1922.



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# THE STORY OF LEITH.

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## Chapter I.

### LEITH IN PREHISTORIC AND ROMAN TIMES.

THE story of some of our Scottish towns is comparatively easy to write because they have their origin in modern times, and consequently the records of their history are usually both full and complete. But Leith is not one of these towns. It is a town of ancient origin, its beginnings taking us far back into the years of past time, and its story, in the earlier years of its history, has to be laboriously sought in many an old charter or other document.

From these documents we learn that as far back as eight hundred years ago Leith was a thriving village. Its houses nestled along the mouth of the Water of Leith, just where the Shore now stands. Unfortunately, we know very little of this old village, for it never entered into the thoughts of the monks—who were the only chroniclers of those days—that future generations would be interested in knowing something of the Leith of their days and the life of its inhabitants. The information they give us is scanty in the extreme, and thus it is



exceedingly difficult to form a clear mental picture of this Leith of other days.

Of one thing we may be sure: fishing would be the chief occupation of the people of the village. And of one other thing we can be equally certain, and that is that the date of the foundation of Leith, could we but get it, would be found to be much further back than the twelfth century. In our own days we read of cities springing up in a single night, like Jonah's gourd, but in those days towns and villages developed very slowly. There was then no such thing among them as "mush-room growth." They grew in size only by slow degrees; and so, if Leith was an important place eight hundred years ago—important, that is, according to the ideas of those times—its history must have begun at a much earlier date. But there are no records of Leith which go back further than 1143, and there is no likelihood of any such ever being discovered.

If Leith, then, dates so far back into olden times, you may be tempted to ask why the Leith of to-day contains so very few really old houses. The reasons are not far to seek. Leith's history is not only interesting but it is also eventful. Its history has often been of much more than local note, and on more than one occasion the fortunes of Leith have been the point on which the whole history of our country has turned. This was especially so, as we shall see, in the days of Queen Mary. Now a town cannot hope to bear the brunt in troublous times and escape unscathed. Leith has often had to pay a heavy penalty for its share in Scotland's history. For example, when the Earl of Hertford led an invading force into Scotland because the Scots had rejected the contract of marriage between the English Prince Edward and the young Mary Queen

of Scots, Henry VIII. ordered him to burn Leith, and, if necessity required it, to massacre its inhabitants. Hertford faithfully carried out the first part of his instructions. Having possessed himself of Leith, he destroyed the pier, and then proceeded to set fire to the town, reducing to ruins as much of it as he possibly could. It is small wonder that Leith to-day contains so few old houses.

Then, again, in modern times the magistrates of Leith have carried through many improvement schemes, and this has meant the sweeping away, not of single houses, but of whole streets. While we are glad that light and air have been let into districts sorely in need of them, yet we cannot but regret the disappearance of many of Leith's old-time houses. But though the houses themselves have passed out of existence their sites can still be pointed out, and we still have pictures of many of them. Some of these are shown in this book.

It has already been said that Leith existed as a village more than eight hundred years ago. But there is a question to ask which carries us very much further back in time than eight hundred years. It takes us back to prehistoric times, times of which there is no written history, because the rude, uncivilized people of those days could, of course, neither read nor write. The question is this: When did man first make his appearance in the district on which modern Leith now stands?

To this question nothing like a definite answer can be given, but learned men who have made a special study of prehistoric Scotland tell us that many thousand years must have elapsed since man first appeared on the scene in our country. These archæologists, as we call

them, are not agreed among themselves as to the age in which Scotland became the scene of human habitation; and this is not to be wondered at, as the evidence on this question must be got from *unwritten* and not from *written* history, and naturally each archæologist places his own interpretation upon this evidence. But they all agree that it must have been many thousands of years before the Christian era that man made his appearance in our land.

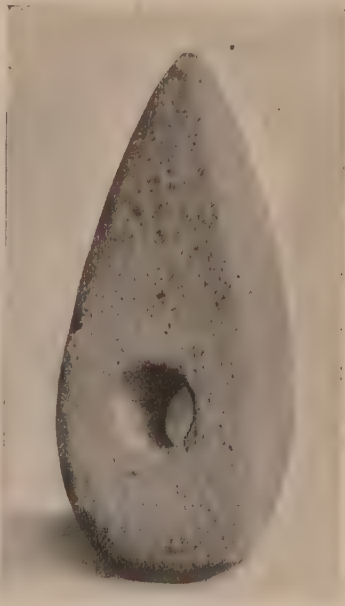
By using your imagination, try to picture how the area on which Leith stands would look in those far-off and so very different times. Imagine the disappearance of every building in Leith, of all its busy streets and still busier docks, and then imagine the whole district covered with great forests, the home of wild beasts such as the fox and the wild cat, and other animals which have long been extinct in Scotland, as the wild boar, the beaver, and the wolf. Imagine the sweep of the forests broken here and there by a loch or marshy piece of ground, for there were innumerable lakes, marshes, bogs, and morasses all over the low ground of our country in those days. The Water of Leith would form part of the picture of your mind's eye, for, of course, then as now it journeyed on from its source among the hills to where its waters mingled with those of the sea. But gone would be the solid stone quays which now confine its course. Your picture would show it turning and twining in its bed between its own natural tree-clad banks, its clear-running water sparkling in the sunshine.

Although we cannot say with any degree of certainty exactly when man first appeared on such a scene as you have just depicted to yourself, we can be pretty certain that the district on which Leith stands began to be populated before the land on which Edinburgh is built.



The ground on which Edinburgh now stands is higher than that which lies between it and the sea, and would therefore afford more security against the attacks of wild beasts and neighbouring tribes. But to the uncivilized man of that time this advantage was more than counterbalanced by other considerations. In the first place, the dense forests would offer him little temptation to penetrate inland; and then, also, he would want to live as near as he could to the sea which provided him with fish, and along the shores of which at ebb-tide he gathered the limpets, mussels, and cockles which formed so large a part of his diet.

These first forefathers of ours lived in rudely constructed dwellings, clothed themselves in skins, and lived on the produce of the sea and such animals as they were able to kill in the forests. They did not know the use of metals. Their implements and weapons were made of stone, bone, horn, or wood. As time went on they gradually became less barbaric. Their stone implements became more finely and more symmetrically worked. Then a discovery was made which lifted the prehistoric peoples into a higher stage of culture and civilization. This discovery was the art of making bronze.



STONE AXE FOUND BENEATH  
LAURIE STREET.

Lastly, just as stone gave way to bronze, so bronze in its turn was superseded by iron. When the use of iron was discovered, tools could be made which were far superior to those made of bronze, just as bronze tools had been far superior to those made of stone. As



BRONZE AXE FOUND IN THE CITADEL.

you doubtless already know, these three periods in our history are known as the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages.

None of the dwellings of these old peoples are known to have been discovered on the site on which Leith stands. This is not to be wondered at, since they were made, not of stone, but of timber, which must have decayed long ago. We cannot even find traces of their

existence, because these have been obliterated by the cultivation of the land before a town came to be built on it. But the skulls of these early inhabitants have been found, as also some of their wedge-shaped stone hammers and axes of bronze.

You will find some of these in the Antiquarian Museum in Queen Street, Edinburgh, a building which you ought to visit if you are interested in prehistoric Scotland. In it you will see a very large collection of articles belonging to prehistoric ages which have been discovered at various times in different parts of Scotland. These have been systematically arranged so that the visitor may trace the successive changes in the life of prehistoric man and his gradual progress in civilization. You will be especially interested in searching out the objects which have been contributed from Leith.

To sum up the progress made from the first human occupation of the site of Leith, we may say that at the beginning of the Christian era prehistoric man had left much of his savagedom behind him. He had begun to grow corn; he was in possession of domestic animals—the horse, dog, ox, sheep, and goat; he had implements of iron, and he showed considerable mechanical skill in various directions.

The materials of unwritten history are to be found in caves, rock shelters, and underground dwellings, in river beds, in drained lochs, in hill forts, and in the memorials erected to their dead by the prehistoric races. With the coming of the Romans to Scotland in A.D. 80 we emerge from the period of unwritten history. Our knowledge of the history of Leith will henceforward be obtained from books, and from written records and documents.

For our knowledge of the Roman campaigns in

Scotland we have to depend largely, though not altogether, upon the materials of unwritten history, and to gather their story from the remains the Romans left behind them—their camps and their forts, and the objects lying buried there beneath the surface. From these, and the story they reveal to men skilled in their interpretation, we obtain much knowledge of the Roman occupation of our district.

It was Julius Agricola who first led the Romans into North Britain and brought them right into our neighbourhood. From the south he made his way through the heart of the Cheviots, and, crossing the river Tweed at Newstead, near Melrose, continued his march until he came to the Lammermuir Hills. Along the line of his route he built forts at strategic points like Newstead, and to overawe the natives he laid waste the land as he advanced.

The news of the slow but steady advance of the seemingly invincible enemy would reach the people of our district long before the Romans themselves appeared. From vantage points on the Calton Hill and Arthur Seat their scouts would be keenly watchful, ready to give the alarm on the first appearance of the glittering spears and helmets of the Roman legions. They would be in readiness to seek refuge within the recesses of the deep forests, or to betake themselves to strongholds on the lower hill-tops, like the fort on the rocky height overlooking Dunsappie Loch, from which they could watch the movements of the invader and find a safe retreat from his devastating legions.

Having crossed the Lammermuirs by the pass at Soutra, Agricola had then to determine his further line of march. His aim was to reach the central district of the Lowlands of Scotland—that is, the country between



the Firth of Forth and the Firth of Clyde. He had a choice between two routes. From Soutra he could march almost due west. This would be his most direct route ; but if he took it he would have to cross the valleys of the North Esk and the South Esk, and the Pentland Hills would also form another obstacle. On the other hand, an easy march of ten miles from Soutra in a north-westerly direction would bring him to the shores of the Firth of Forth at the mouth of the Esk, from which point his march along the coast plain would present few difficulties.

He chose the latter route. Agricola, as Tacitus tells us, was a skilled military engineer, and his quick eye at once perceived the fine strategic position of Inveresk, protected as it was on west and south by the great Caledonian Forest, and safe from attack on the east by Pinkie Cleuch. It commanded all the routes from the south and east going westwards towards the Clyde. Many remains of the great fort built by the Romans at Inveresk are still to be seen, including the heating chambers of their baths, while Inveresk Church and numerous other buildings near it have probably been erected from stones taken from the fort.

Leaving a garrison behind him, and crossing the Esk by a wooden bridge—the present so-called Roman Bridge not being built until many centuries later—Agricola marched westward by way of Restalrig to the country between the Forth and Clyde, his military way passing right through our parish. Whether there was any hamlet or village of the Britons where Leith now stands we have no means of knowing ; but as our district is the meeting-place of routes by road from the south, east, and west, it must have been a centre of traffic for the population in forest clearings and along the shore of the Forth.

At the west end of Portobello there is a road of Roman origin, known to-day as the Fishwives' Causeway, though, of course, it would not be so named in Roman times. This ancient road has for many long years formed part of the boundary between the parishes of Duddingston and South Leith. It is called a causeway because it was a causewayed road, as all Roman roads were, its stones being mostly boulders from the seashore close at hand, and quite undressed by the Roman work-



THE FISHWIVES' CAUSEWAY.

men who laid them. When the present Portobello Road was made about 1770, the fishwives of Fisherrow, on their way to Edinburgh to dispose of their fish, continued to favour the old causewayed road in preference to the new; hence the name Fishwives' Causeway. It is a causeway no longer, its stones having been lifted and utilized in the construction of the great wall enclosing the Craigentenny parks on the left side of the turnpike road from Wheatfield to Portobello, where their round boulder shape at once betrays them.

In the year 180 the hated Romans were driven south of the Cheviots. Yet Leith had not seen the last of the Roman legions, for in the year 208 the great soldier-emperor, Severus, set sail from York for the Forth with a mighty fleet to punish the wild Caledonians for their raids beyond Hadrian's Wall. We can imagine the excitement and alarm when the great armada was seen heading up the Forth. Severus landed his troops at Cramond, which became his headquarters during his three years' stay in Scotland; and there, as at Inveresk, you may see stones showing Roman handiwork and an eagle that some Roman soldier with an artistic eye has carved on the Eagle Rock by the shore. Severus was to find, as Edward I. centuries later, that to win victories is not to conquer a country, and, when he sailed from Cramond on his return to York, the Roman capital of Britain, the shores of the Forth saw the Roman legions for the last time.

The many chance finds of Roman relics that have been made within the bounds of Edinburgh and Leith have led to the belief that a Roman post midway between Inveresk and Cramond must have existed somewhere in our neighbourhood. The discovery of Roman bricks from time to time in the foundations of St. Margaret's Chapel in Edinburgh Castle has led some to think that a Roman station once existed there. Roman coins have been found at several points, including the Fishwives' Causeway and Leith Walk, and a rich find of Samian ware—the best china of the Romans—was uncovered in digging the foundations of the Regent Arch in the landward part of our parish. Such discoveries do not necessarily indicate a Roman settlement, for such chance finds occur in all parts of Scotland, and even in countries the Romans never knew. They are rather a

proof that during the Roman occupation much commercial intercourse grew up between the Britons and their conquerors, and that this trade continued long after the Roman legions had retired beyond the wall of Hadrian.



THE CRAIGENTINNY MARBLES.

The Romans used to bury their dead in tombs ranged along the sides of the roads outside their cities—the strip of ground on each side being laid out much after

the manner of our cemeteries. The famous Appian Way, the great road that led southwards from ancient Rome, is flanked on both sides for many miles with handsome tombs. Though Roman tombstones have been discovered in other parts of Scotland, none has so far been found in our neighbourhood. By a strange chance, however, one may see a great sepulchral monument, designed from a tomb on the Appian Way, standing solitary and alone in one of the Craigentenny parks close by the Fishwives' Causeway, and just within the ancient parishes of South Leith and Restalrig. This is the tomb of William Henry Miller of Craigentenny, who wished to be buried in one of his own fields. It is ornamented with two beautifully sculptured marble panels, known to fame as the "Craigentenny Marbles." It is a strange coincidence indeed that full sixteen centuries after the Romans left our district there should have been erected directly on the Roman road a tomb so purely Roman in its design as that which we have at Craigentenny.



ROAD FROM WHEATFIELD TO PORTOBELLO.



## Chapter II.

### LEITH IN EARLY DAYS.

ABOUT one hundred and fifty years after the departure of the Romans from North Britain we find our country divided among four nations. The Picts held all the territory north of the Forth and Clyde save Argyllshire, which was held by the Scots, while the Britons occupied Strathclyde, the territory between the Clyde and the Solway, and the Angles held the south-east of the country, their territory stretching from the Firth of Forth across the Cheviots into what is now England. Until these four nations became one our country could never hope to prosper, for the Picts, Scots, and Britons waged constant wars against the Angles of Lothian, as that part of their territory between the Forth and the Tweed was called, and they were also frequently at war with each other.

One of the greatest forces in aiding the work of progress and civilization was Christianity, which, more than the wars of ambitious chiefs and kings, helped to bring about the union of the different peoples who occupied North Britain. It was St. Columba and his earnest and tireless missionaries from Iona—the Holy Island of the west—who evangelized all the land north of the Forth, while monks like St. Cuthbert brought all the country south of the Forth to a knowledge of the Gospel. At

length the Piets and the Scots united into one nation, and in 1018 Malcolm II., their king, brought Strathclyde and Lothian also under his rule. Our country had now become united, and from this time forward is known as Scotland. With Malcolm II.'s acquisition of Lothian in 1018 Leith became a part of Scotland; of which for so long it was to be the chief seaport.

Of Leith before 1018 we know very little for certain. Of the Leith of two or three centuries later we can form a more accurate picture. There were then, as now, two Leiths—North Leith and South Leith; but whereas in our day these two are parts of the same town, the Port of Leith, they were quite separate and distinct places in those far-back times. One point of likeness there was between them, and that was that neither of them was allowed to manage its own affairs. North Leith was governed by the abbot and monks of Holyrood Abbey, founded by David I. in 1128, while the destinies of South Leith lay in the hands of the lairds of Restalrig. It is difficult to realize these facts. The little village of North Leith has grown into a busy, bustling port, while of the great Abbey Church of Holyrood which ruled it only a part remains, and that a roofless ruin. The little South Leith of those days, not considered large enough to have a church of its own, is now a great and thriving town, while Restalrig, its old-time superior, is to-day a mere hamlet, soon to disappear before the ever-extending city, which even now has invaded its village street. What strange changes the whirligig of time brings about!

Besides founding the Abbey of Holyrood David I. richly endowed it with lands and other gifts. In the Abbey's great charter of 1143 there is engrossed a long list of the many possessions bestowed upon it by its royal founder, and among these are the lands of North Leith

and that part of South Leith which now extends from the present Coalhill to the Vaults. These lands, along with those of South Leith, then formed part of a wide area round the mouth of the river known as Inverleith, and are designated in the Abbey charter "that part of Inverleith which is nearest the harbour." These words would seem to show that even at this early date Leith had started on its career as a port. The shortened form of the name, Leith, early became specially applied to the town, while the longer form, Inverleith, like the name Inveresk at Musselburgh, was restricted to the lands farther up the river.

North Leith must have been a tiny village in those days, for long centuries afterwards it contained only seven hundred inhabitants. The Coalhill was then a pleasant road with the cottages of the abbot's tenants embowered amid their apple orchards. The Water of Leith at this time flowed as a full stream between grassy banks sloping down to the water's edge. On these banks stood the little village, its outline reflected in the clear water, while on the edge of the stream were the fishers' clustered cottages, made of timber or unsmoothed stone, with roofs of straw, or of heather of which so much grew near by.

It was the duty of the inhabitants of North Leith to supply the abbot and canons with fresh fish, so generally eaten in Catholic times with their many fast days on which meat was forbidden. Their training as fishermen made them excellent sailors for manning the abbot's ships, and down to the present day North Leith has always been noted for its hardy and skilful mariners.

As the people of North Leith paid their rents to the abbot mostly in fish and farm produce, there was much coming and going between the Abbey and the little

village. There were only two ways of approaching Holyrood from North Leith. One was by the ford at Bonnington, from which in our own day an old and narrow way still leads to the later Newhaven Road. The other was by a ford at Old Bridge End, when the street now



THE OLD COALHILL.

“The Gate that leads to the Ford.”

*(From a drawing in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries.)*

known as the Coalhill had the somewhat lengthy name of “the gate (=street) that leads to the ford.”

Here there was also a ferry, where the people were taken across by boat when the water flowed smooth and deep at full tide. This ferry we may call the Abbot's Ferry, for to the Abbot of Holyrood went most of the dues paid by those who crossed to and fro. Near Holyrood Abbey there still exists a quaint and picturesque



little building, strangely misnamed Queen Mary's Bath. As it stands just where the two ancient roads from the Leith and Broughton districts converge upon the Abbey it may have been a porter's lodge to a side entrance much used by the constant traffic between the Abbey and its possessions at Canonmills, Broughton, Bonnington, and North Leith.

While the Abbey Church was especially built for the use of the abbot and canons, the people of North Leith along with the other vassals of the abbot were allowed to worship in the nave along with the lay brethren or servants of the monastery, while they themselves used the choir. No doubt the somewhat inconvenient isolation of the inhabitants of North Leith was often pleaded by them as an excuse for their non-appearance at Mass in the Abbey Church along with their fellow-vassals.

The abbot had the power of dispensing justice in the Abbey Court held in his tolbooth in the Canongate, and of inflicting various pains and penalties on those of his Leith vassals who broke the law. On the other hand, those same vassals had the right of sanctuary within the precincts of the Abbey. Fleeing from those who might be seeking to wreak vengeance upon them, if they could but reach the Abbot's Sanctuary they were safe. None might dare to lay hands upon them there. The bounds of the sanctuary were anciently marked by four girth or boundary crosses at the cardinal points. But these, like so many other pre-Reformation monuments, have long since disappeared. The site of the western cross, which stood at the foot of the Canongate, opposite the outer gate of the Abbey, is marked by a circle of stones intersected by a cross set in the causeway, while the site of the sanctuary boundary on this side is

to-day marked by the letter **S** set in lead in the causeway at three different places.

But, after all, down to the beginning of the nineteenth century North Leith occupied but a backwater in the stream of Leith's history. The real Leith, the Leith of history, was South Leith.

In those early times South Leith consisted of little more than a line of houses facing the Water of Leith, and



RESTALRIG.

stretching as far as the Broad Wynd, which was then waste land bordering the beach. It was quite surpassed in size and importance by Restalrig. Both were parts of the barony or estate of Restalrig, but it was Restalrig, and not Leith, which gave its name to the barony and to the family, the De Lestallrics, who owned it. We hear of this family as barons of Restalrig in 1198, some fifty years after David I.'s death, when the name comes into history for the first time, the name of Thomas de

Lestalic appearing in a Dunfermline Abbey charter of that date. Thomas de Lestalic seems to have been a man of influence in his day, for in 1210 we find him Sheriff of Edinburgh, a sheriffdom that was co-extensive with Edinburgh's trading precinct as a royal burgh, for it extended from Levenhall beyond Musselburgh on the east to the river Almond on the west. Thomas de Lestalic, like most Normans, was a good friend to the Church, and bestowed upon it, among other gifts, the lands of Coatfield, thus showing this local place-name to be more than seven hundred years old. It is probably derived from the Saxon word "cote" meaning a sheepfold. In the charter conveying these lands of Coatfield to the Abbey of Inchcolm we have the earliest mention of any townsmen of Leith in the names of Robert Hood, Baldwin Comyn, and Ernauld, who seems to have had no surname.

Thomas de Lestalic, however, was not the first owner of the barony of Restalrig, for from the Dunfermline charter we find that he had succeeded his father Edward. How many generations of this family had held the barony before Thomas and his father Edward we do not know. But the first De Lestalic is generally understood to have been one of those Norman adventurers who came to seek fortune in Scotland about the time of David I., and took his surname from the barony gifted him by the king. When this first De Lestalic received as his domains all the South Leith and Restalrig districts, he built his stronghold on the craggy height overlooking the waters of Lochend. This castle of the De Lestalics has, of course, long centuries ago disappeared amid the cruel and devastating warfare by which Scotland was so often desolated. The ruins still to be seen rising above the waters of Lochend are not part of the castle



LOCHEND, SHOWING REMAINS OF THE OLD CASTLE OF THE LOGANS.



of the De Lestalrics, but of the home, partly castle, partly mansion, of the Logans, their successors in the barony.

Either Edward de Lestalric or his son Sir Thomas, whom we have already mentioned, built a new church in the improved Norman style of architecture, and this church was, of course, erected, not in South Leith but in Restalrig, the most important part of the barony. It was at this time that the estate or manor came to be recognized as a parish, and the new church as the parish church. To this parish church at Restalrig for many centuries the people of South Leith went to worship, as of course did also the inhabitants of Restalrig and the rest of the barony owned by the De Lestalrics. Later on this church gave place to the church that stands in Restalrig to-day, and South Leith about 1488 came to be possessed of a church of its own.

The twelfth-century village of South Leith was very different from the picturesque country villages of our time, with their neat cottages, each with its shining windows decorated with flowers and snow-white curtains. In the twelfth century cottages had no windows, not even window openings, the chimney hole in the roof and the open door admitting all the light required. Yet they were not so comfortless to our forefathers as they might seem, for life in those days was lived in the open air much more than in ours. Mothers did their cooking and washing and many other household duties in the open before their doors, and the village street served as workshop for the village smith and carpenter.

The inhabitants of South Leith mostly found their employment in tilling the fields that, with moor and woodlands, filled all the land between Edinburgh, Restalrig, and Leith; and even centuries later, when Leith

had grown from village to town, its inhabitants still derived much of what wealth they possessed from farming. From their fields, and their few cattle, sheep, and swine, or from those of their neighbours, came their food and clothing, and not from cargoes brought in from abroad. But you must put from your mind all notions of the farming of to-day. Then there were no great farmsteadings with their hinds' cottages dotted over the land; there were no farm labourers working for wages as with us to-day. Instead of wages, each had so much land, which he tilled for his own use, and in return helped to farm his overlord's land as well. There were in those days two classes of tenants—the free and the unfree, or villeins as they were called. All paid their rent by service of some kind in accordance with the feudal system—the free mostly by military service and certain dues either in money or in kind (that is, in farm produce to feed his lord and his retainers), and the unfree by helping to till the lands of De Lestralric as well as their own holding. But ere many centuries had passed all the folks around Leith gradually became free tenants, and the service on the overlord's lands became simply a part of the rent of the holding which might be done by a hired labourer.

This old custom of rendering so much service as part of rent, and especially rent of land, lingered among us for centuries after this time, for in 1640 the feu-duty of a house in the Kirkgate opposite South Leith Church was forty pence Scots and one day's work in autumn—that is, in the harvest fields of the Laird of Restalrig. We would find similar conditions attached to the feus of other old houses in Leith could we but get a peep at their old feu-charters, where such still exist.

But the landscape of those centuries differed from ours in a more striking way than merely in the absence

of farm steadings and their cottages. In these times the land was unenclosed. There were no hedges or dykes dividing it up into separate fields. The land all round Leith formed one great tract divided by balks of turf into strips or rigs. Most of its inhabitants had a certain number of these strips, according to the size of their holdings, but instead of the strips belonging to one person all lying adjacent to each other they were scattered all over the district, no two being together. Remains of this open-field system still linger among us. The fields of Lochend farm to-day form three huge tracts. The first around the loch once occupied the whole area between the Lochend and Easter Roads, the second stretches from the Lochend to the Restalrig Road, and the third from the latter road to the Craigentenny Meadows. Leith was like one large farm.

It is evident that these strips could not be ploughed separately. The great fields composed of these strips had to be farmed by the joint labours of all their holders working together. Each farmer had therefore to co-operate with his neighbours in the work, and had to farm exactly as they did. That is why this wasteful, unscientific, open-field system of farming continued through so many centuries. The great wooden ploughs, the joint property of all the farmers, were drawn by teams of from four to eight oxen.

This system of farming prevailed in our district, and indeed all over Scotland, down to the middle of the eighteenth century, when fields began to be enclosed by hedgerows, and large farm steadings began to come into fashion. The two great fields on either side of Restalrig Road are relics of the old open-field system of farming. The names of all the farmers of these old open-field days in the Leith and Restalrig districts, with the size of their

holdings and their shares in the ploughing, are recorded in manuscript records still existing.

The times, seasons, and methods of farming were determined at an open-air meeting of the local farmers, known as the Burlaw Court, held fortnightly in the Doocot (Dovecot) Park, on the farm of Newmains, whose fields were where Hermitage Place and the adjacent terraces stand to-day. In those days every barony had its dovecot. In cold and stormy weather this Burlaw Court had its meeting in Clephand's Tavern at the townend, a site now covered by the tenements near what was once the Watt Hospital or alms-house, and now utilized as a temporary school.

The great stone dovecot of the Logans of Coatfield disappeared, as did the Burlaw Court itself, in the second half of the eighteenth century, to make way for the houses and gardens of Hermitage Place. Yet the land on which it stood, so long and so familiarly known as the Doocot Park, has never been without dovecots from that time till now, for several of the dwellers here in days gone by, either from ad-



A CHARMING OLD LEITH DOVECOT,  
NOW REMOVED.

(From a drawing by Thomas Ross,  
LL. D., Architect.)

herence to ancient custom or because of their added charm, had pigeon-cots erected in the gardens behind their houses.

The delightful dovecot shown in the accompanying illustration, a fitting ornament to the garden at 1 Hermitage Place which it once adorned, for it survives no longer, must have been designed and constructed by a craftsman of rich artistic gift. Another that lacks, however, the elegance and grace of the one pictured here forms a kind of decorative finial to the summer-house of a neighbouring garden. It is many long years since pigeons sheltered here, and the dovecot itself much overgrown with ivy is "wearin' awa'" like the old Leith merchant family who have owned the house behind which it stands for over a hundred years, and with whom stories of the birds that once fluttered around it are still cherished memories.

Beyond the cornfields lay the pasture lands and the waste, stretching away to merge in the Figgate Whins, which extended to near Musselburgh. These pasture and waste lands were at least as valuable as their arable corn land, for in those early days people depended as much on their cattle, sheep, and swine for food as they did on their corn. The waste land was covered with whins and heather and patches of woodland, where the sheep and cattle grazed, and the swine and geese "found for themselves," for they fed on many things which other animals refused. Here also the Leithers gathered wood, and in autumn dug their peats for winter fuel.

The common grazing ground for Leith was the Links, then covered with whins as well as grass. Thither, every morning at sunrise, the town herd, with sound of horn, drove the cows of the inhabitants, and there he tended them all day till sundown—a very necessary duty when



hedgerows were unknown, and one that accounts for the number of "herds" in olden days, who kept their charges from trespassing on the growing crops. In the autumn, after harvest, when the sheaves had been safely gathered into the stackyard, the herds had an off-time, for then the stubble lands formed one vast grazing ground, where the cattle, sheep, and swine, and even the geese, of which the Leithers kept large flocks, wandered and grazed at will.



NETHER QUARRY HOLES, EASTER ROAD.  
An old Leith Farmstead.

### Chapter III.

#### LEITH'S EARLY SHIPPING TRADE.

IN the early Middle Ages Berwick became the greatest commercial town in Scotland: "A city so populous and of such trade," says an English chronicler of the time of Edward I., "that it might justly be called another Alexandria, whose riches were the sea, and the waters its walls." This great prosperity of Berwick as a centre of commerce is said to have been due mostly to the wool trade with the Netherlands of the great religious houses, such as the abbeys of Kelso and Melrose.

At this period the monks took the leading part in the making of Scotland, for there was little commercial or industrial enterprise to be found outside the monasteries. Wherever they settled the land was made "blithe with plough and harrow," and in this way the waste lands became fruitful fields. Further, they encouraged trading among others by acting the part of bankers and advancing money without interest on the security of lands and tenements.

For centuries the best wool of Scotland was exported to Flanders, France, and Italy—to the latter country through Bruges, where the merchants of Florence had large dealings in wool with the brethren of Melrose and Newbattle, whose sheep were numbered by thousands. One of the earliest records of Scottish overseas trade is

the charter of 1182 (still preserved in the Register House, Edinburgh), granted by the crusading Count Philip of Flanders to the monks of Melrose, allowing them passage through his territories free of all toll or exaction—a very valuable privilege in those troubled days.

When the prosperity of Berwick was blighted through the savage massacre of its inhabitants by Edward I. in 1296, Leith began to share in the wool trade. The monks of Melrose and Newbattle from this time onward sent their wool to Edinburgh, and thence to Leith, perhaps in wagons, as they used to send it to Berwick, but more probably in long trains of shaggy pack-horses, which travelled along at a good pace with a jingle of bridle bells, each heavily loaded with packs of wool. From Leith the wool was shipped to Sluis, the port of Bruges, to be woven into cloth by the Flemish weavers, among whom the fleeces of the monks of Melrose were widely known and highly valued.

It is during the period of quiet but steady advance of the reign of David I. (1124–53) that we find Leith, chiefly owing to its proximity to the larger town of Edinburgh and its royal castle, coming into frequent notice, and steadily rising in importance as a centre of trade. The notices of this early trade are not so detailed as we should like them to be, as the accounts of the king's customs from goods shipped at the various ports during the first part of this period have not come down to us, and, as all imports down to 1597 came into the country duty free, no detailed record of Scotland's import trade during the Middle Ages exists. It is only by a close search of the Exchequer Rolls, as the accounts of the King's Customs are called, that a knowledge of the trade of Leith can be gained. These Rolls were begun in David's reign, but the very earliest to be pre-

served, some fragments of the year 1264, give us such a glimpse of Leith's commercial activity as plainly shows us that our town had been a busy trading port for many years before these records begin, and Scotland a commercial country from a more remote period than has generally been believed.

Under the opening year of the Rolls we have the following entries anent the trade of Leith :—

“ Item, for carriage of 548 cattle by ship from Inverness to Leith, £7, 13s.

“ Item, for 20 lasts of herrings brought to our lord the king, 20 merks.

“ Item, for their carriage by ship to Leith, £5, 7s. 3d.”

These entries show that cattle and fish were features of the trade of Leith in those early days, as they are still. The Abbot of Holyrood had several ships at North Leith engaged in the fishing industry on the Firth of Forth. The stipend of the parish minister of North Leith is still in part derived from a commutation of the tithes of the fish brought into Newhaven. No doubt the canons of Holyrood were active traders as well as keen fishers, and, like the brethren of their order at Scone and the Dominican monks of Dunfermline, had their own trading vessels; but, as their goods were specially exempted by their charter from paying custom duties into the royal Exchequer, we have only meagre and incidental notices of their oversea trade. The causeway recently laid bare immediately north of the Abbey Church might have been part of the road over which there was much coming and going between Holyrood and its ships at Leith in that golden age of peace and prosperity so ruthlessly ended by the overbearing ambition of Edward I.

Besides her trade with home ports, Leith then, as to-day, had much commercial intercourse with England, sending cattle, and salmon and other fish—salted, of course—to Yarmouth, London, Rye, and other east and south coast ports, receiving in exchange mostly wheat and other cereals. But at this time England was not the market best suited for Scottish exports, for both countries exported raw materials and imported manufactured articles, and, besides, all commercial dealing between them from after the days of Edward I. was constantly being interrupted by war and all the unfriendly feeling which precedes and follows it.

Mutual hostility towards England—the legacy of the aggressive policy of Edward I. and Edward III. in both countries—brought France more or less into close alliance with Scotland from the days of Wallace and Bruce down to the time of Louis XIV., when British foreign policy made such an alliance no longer possible. This alliance conferred many trading advantages on the merchants of both countries in days when the privileges of traders in foreign lands were few and hedged about with many restrictions. Besides, Scotland and France were mutual markets for each other's products, each supplying what the other required. From her earliest years, therefore, as a port Leith carried on an active trade with France, especially with the towns of Bordeaux and Rochelle, Rouen and Dieppe. To these ports Leith sent cured fish (for which the many fast days imposed by the Church on the faithful in pre-Reformation times created a constant demand), wool, horses, and hides, receiving in return cloth, silks, dried fruits, and wines, for Leith, next to London, has always been the greatest wine port in the kingdom.

Another region with which Leith has always carried



on a brisk trade from the earliest times, more especially after the decline of the Hanseatic League as a trading power, was that of the "Eastland Seas," not, of course, the seas of the Indies and the East, for Vasco da Gama had not yet discovered the sea route to those regions, but the countries around the Baltic Sea - Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Prussia, and Poland. The great Baltic ports were well known to the trading communities along the east coast of Scotland, and with these in general, and those of Danzig and Königsberg, Stralsund and Lübeck in particular, Leith carried on an important and ever-growing trade, about which our information, mostly to be found in old German account books, becomes more and more abundant with the passing centuries.

On the death of the dreaded King Haco on his way home to Norway after the Battle of Largs, Alexander III. concluded a friendly treaty with his successor Magnus, to whose son Eric he gave in marriage his only daughter Margaret, the mother of the ill-fated Maid of Norway. This marriage led to much going and coming between Scotland and Norway, and at this time was begun that trade in timber which has made Leith, after Glasgow, the greatest timber port in Scotland; for although a large part of Scotland, especially in the north, was at this time covered with forests, the difficulties of land transport were so great that it was easier and cheaper to bring it from oversea. To the ports on the "Eastland Sea," then, Leith sent her usual exports of wool and skins, and received in return timber, wheat, flour, rye, and malt, all, of course, for the merchant burgesses of Edinburgh; and from the Exchequer Rolls we have a curious notice of Prussian sailors "in their ignorance" carrying away skins from Leith without paying the necessary duty.

Later still, we find iron and wood being imported at Leith for the construction of military engines, and for the repair and rebuilding of the castles of Edinburgh and Stirling. In those days, too, when tea, coffee, and cocoa were unknown, and the beverages consumed at meals were wines and other alcoholic liquors, German "beer," much used by the rich, was largely imported, and was so called to distinguish it from the home-brewed "ale," more generally used by the great mass of the people.

The oldest document still preserved in connection with the Scots-German trade is the well-known letter of Sir William Wallace and his brave companion-in-arms, Sir Andrew Murray, sent after the Battle of Stirling Bridge, and most likely from Leith, to their well-beloved friends, the mayors and commons of Lübeck and Hamburg, inviting their merchants to come to Scotland, and asking them to forward the business of two Scots merchants, Burnet and Frere, whose names are otherwise unknown.

The chief market for whatever Scotland had to export—mostly wool, cheese, coarse cloth, skins, furs, and cured salmon—was the Netherlands, and especially the province of Flanders; and the history of the commerce of Scotland with the Netherlands is really the history of Scottish trade. The chief centre of Scotland's—and, therefore, of Leith's—trade with the Netherlands in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was Bruges, then the chief commercial city of Western Europe and the greatest trading centre of the Hanseatic League. Our early commercial intercourse with Bruges is commemorated in the Scottendyce, or Scottish quarter, known in that city from time immemorial as the district where the Scottish traders dwelt. The merchants of Bruges were venturesome navigators, and frequented all the leading

fairs and markets of the world. To their city overland routes led from France, Germany, Italy, and Central Europe, and in its warehouses were to be found the products not only of Europe, but also of Northern Africa and Central Asia, as well as those of Arabia, India, and China.

Bruges all through the Middle Ages, therefore, was just such a universal emporium as suited the needs of Scottish merchants, to and from which their ships could carry mixed cargoes of supplies for merchants trading in small quantities. From Bruges, then, the traders of Edinburgh and Leith imported whatever articles of luxury they could afford to buy—dried fruits, spices, nutmegs, pepper, ginger, figs, and similar articles from the East, dye-stuffs and the finer cloths and embroidery, gold and silver work for the services of the Church, the different varieties of wines, with sugar and aromatic spices to sweeten their harsh and acid taste. Indeed, wine was in such general demand in the prosperous days of Alexander III. that whole cargoes of the various French kinds were imported direct from Rochelle and Bordeaux—those of the king being sometimes stored in the abbot's vaults at Holyrood, which would seem to imply that, even at this early date, the monastery was a favourite dwelling-place of royalty.

Leith shipping has suffered much in recent years from disasters at sea, as in 1883, when three steamers were lost with all hands, for the dangers of the North Sea in the winter months are notorious; but in the distant days of Alexander III., some seven hundred years ago, Leith mariners voyaging to foreign shores had to run so many risks besides storms at sea, that one wonders how they were able to pursue their calling with any degree of profit.

The Edinburgh burgh records, and other old documents from which we gather what little there is to be known about Leith's earliest shipping trade, always speak of the overseas trade with foreign countries, because of its many risks, as the "wyld aventouris." This fact will help you to understand why merchants engaged in foreign trade in later centuries, as in the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth, were known as "Merchant Adventurers," a name that suited them well, for though eager to make money, they were ever ready to venture it again in new undertakings, in the pursuit of which they incurred many risks and met with many stirring adventures. The greatest risks and dangers incurred by merchants engaged in foreign trade in those early days and all through the Middle Ages arose from piracy. Pirates nowadays are only to be found in story books like *Treasure Island*, but all through mediæval and much later times pirates were rife in all our seas.

All through her history as a port, well down into the eighteenth century, Leith shipping suffered from winter storms, the depredations of pirates, and the risks and losses incidental to less civilized times. No port ever sent out more daring and skilful seamen, and just as the dread of the submarine did not deter those of our own day from putting to sea during the Great War, so in the same bold spirit did Leith mariners brave the many perils of the sea in days of old. But although the many risks to which merchants and sailors were exposed in past ages did not deter them from pursuing their calling, they influenced the policy of rulers, and Alexander III. decreed that "merchants should not cross over the sea to any place beyond the kingdom, for so many ships were lost and others taken by enemies and pirates that the kingdom was thereby much impover-

ished." This was no doubt very short-sighted policy on the part of the king, and had it been followed by his successors must have been fatal to the prosperity of Leith as a port; but that there was much excuse for such a law as this, the story of our local shipping amply bears out.

It is noticeable in the records of these times that many ships which met evil fortune in crossing the North Sea were not Scottish but Flemish. That was the natural result of King Alexander's edict forbidding Scottish ships to engage in oversea trade. Foreign merchants seemed to find this trade quite profitable in spite of its many risks, and now, as an old Scots chronicler tells us, "many ships laden with all manner of merchandise would come to the country in those days, and barter all their merchandise, goods for goods." These merchants were mostly Flemings—that is, men of Flanders, of whom many had in previous years settled on our coasts. Many Flemings also settled in Edinburgh, where a protest was made against their having the same privileges of trade as the native burgesses. Here, as elsewhere, they kept in close touch with their kinsmen in Flanders, and thus gave a great impetus to our local trade with the Low Countries, ship after ship sailing from Leith to Bruges and other ports with large exports of wool and hides for the cloth and leather manufacturers, to return laden with a varied assortment of goods for the stocking of the merchants' booths of those early days of Leith's commerce.



## Chapter IV.

### LEITH'S PART WITH ROBERT THE BRUCE.

WITH the tragic and untimely death of Alexander III. Scotland was to enter upon a long, cruel, and desolating war to maintain her independence against the aggressive policy of Edward I. During this troubled period the prosperity which Alexander III. and his immediate predecessors, the "Kings of Peace," had done so much to build up by their wise and friendly policy towards England was completely destroyed. Alexander's little granddaughter, the Maid of Norway, was the nearest heir to the throne. The Scots agreed with her grand-uncle, Edward I., that she should become the bride of his son, Edward, Prince of Wales, and in this way bring about the union of England and Scotland under one sovereign. But this child of many hopes, the little Maid, died on the voyage from Norway, leaving to Scotland a disputed succession which gave an opening for the mischievous interference of Edward I. The English king's attempt to make Scotland a province of England changed the two otherwise friendly countries into bitter foes. The three centuries of devastating wars that followed made Scotland very unlike the happy and prosperous country she was in the days of Alexander III.

In 1296 Edward captured Berwick, and, by a savage

massacre of its inhabitants, reduced that city of merchant princes to the market town it has ever since remained. Mounted on his great war horse Bayard, Edward led his army northwards and took up his quarters at Holyrood, while his fleet, laden with supplies for his troops, anchored off Leith.

During his progress through Scotland the landowners of the country great and small, churchmen, nobles, and the chief burgesses, were summoned to do homage and swear fealty to the conqueror. The names of all who performed these acts of homage have been carefully preserved on four rolls of parchment known as the Ragman Roll. These rolls form a valuable record of the lands, though not always of their owners, in our own immediate district at this date, and to them we are indebted for any little light that gives us a peep at the condition of things in and around Leith during those dark and troubled days. It is there that we find for the first time the name of an Edinburgh magistrate, namely, William de Dederyk, Alderman, as the provost was called in those early days.

There, too, we find the name of Adam, parson of Restalrig, the parish church of Leith at this time. King Edward had seized the lands of Holyrood, so that the greater half of Leith passed into the hands of the English; but Abbot Adam and all the canons swore a solemn oath of fealty to the English king in the Abbey chapter-house, a few remains of whose foundations may still be seen on the lawn at Holyrood. In those days men did not observe very faithfully feudal pledges not over willingly given, so, to add to the solemnity of their oath, the abbot and canons were compelled to swear over the sacrament bread—the Corpus Christi or body of Christ—brought from the high altar dedicated to the Holy Rood.

In this way was the convent again put in possession of its lands, no doubt to the joy of its sorely troubled vassals in Leith, who rejoiced to have the good abbot and canons come among them as they were wont to do. Thus did the policy of Abbot Adam of swearing fealty to Edward I. secure the safety of his monastery and the fortunes of his part of Leith during his remaining years. But they were difficult and dangerous times, and it was no easy matter knowing what course to steer. The Abbey with its adjacent possessions was doomed to suffer grievously at the hands of the English before they would yield to acknowledge Scotland's independence.

The lands of Holyrood were not the only parts of Leith to come under King Edward's peace at this time. Farther down the roll we find the name of John de Lestalric and that of his near neighbour, and no doubt good friend, Geoffrey de Fressinglye, Lord of Duddingston. A few years later, however, De Lestalric and his companion-in-arms, De Fressinglye, were to forfeit their lands of Restalrig and Duddingston for being among the first to enlist under the banner of Robert the Bruce and doing their "bit" in the long and strenuous fight for Scotland's independence. In this struggle they were either killed or worn out with hardships and toil, for, like Randolph and the Good Lord James, they both died comparatively early in life.

The early struggle against England is rather an obscure period of Scotland's history, and but for the immediate neighbourhood of the mighty fortress of Edinburgh Castle, which was strongly held for England until the year of Bannockburn, and which dominated and held in subjection the whole neighbourhood, Leith might have dropped out of the history of this time altogether; but, as it is, it bulks more largely, if less romantically,

than Edinburgh itself in the story of those stirring and chivalrous days.

No sooner did the English garrison take up its quarters in Edinburgh Castle than English ships began to arrive in Leith harbour with large supplies of all kinds, the various items of which show us that grains and wines were then, as with us to-day, among the chief imports. These stores, many of which came from Berwick under the protection of the traitor Earl of Dunbar, who was ever on the side of England, included wheat, barley, malt, meal and wines, munitions of war, and "Eastland boards" for the manufacture of Edward I.'s great war machines.

Many of these stores were reshipped in smaller craft for the English garrisons at Stirling, Clackmannan, and other places of strength farther up the Forth. In 1303, for example, an engine capable of throwing missiles weighing one hundredweight was sent with munitions from Edinburgh Castle to Edward I., who had been for three months baffled in the capture of Stirling Castle by the vigilance and skill of that gallant knight and near neighbour to the Leith folks of those days, Sir William Oliphant of Muirhouse, just beyond Pilton.

For the protection of these stores a detachment from the Castle garrison was posted in Leith, no doubt in some fort on the Shore near the Broad Wynd, the seaward limit of the town in those days. There were no great docks in Leith at this time, with their miles of stone quays. The Shore, which extended as far as the present Broad Wynd, was then the only quay for the loading and discharging of vessels. How picturesque must have been the scene, with the green and wooded banks of the winding river, and the old-world ships with their great high sterns, from which their captains could overlook

and direct all that was being done ! How great also the noise and bustle among the English soldiers as they loaded their lumbering and creaking wagons with their share of stores for Edinburgh Castle !

There was no Leith Walk then, nor for many centuries after, and we must put from our minds all our notions of roads derived from the fine highways of our own day. The Easter Road, Bonnington Road, and the Restalrig Road were then mere tracks across the heathery waste that, but for the cornfields adjacent to the two towns, filled all the area between the port and the city, if we may so dignify the four hundred or more thatched dwellings that made up the Edinburgh of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The most direct road, and, no doubt, the one most used by the English soldiery, was the Bonnington Road, which led cityward by way of Broughton. It was at this early date, one may be sure, the most frequented and the best of the three tracks, for the monks of Holyrood to whom it belonged were great roadmakers.

In the spring of 1314 many of those same English soldiers who had been accustomed to drive so merrily with munitions and stores between the Castle and the Shore fell under the swords of Randolph and his companions when they captured Edinburgh Castle by climbing the Castle rock overlooking Princes Street—the most brilliant feat of arms of that heroic age. Immediately afterwards the English garrison posted in Leith burnt all their shipping and stores and sailed away southwards to Berwick, then a great English naval and military base for supplying and fitting out expeditions against Scotland.

A few months later, on a bright day towards the end of June, the great army of Edward II., on its way to



Bannockburn, and anticipating an easy and triumphant victory, encamped between Edinburgh and Leith to receive supplies from the fleet which lay off the harbour. This great English host, though perhaps only a fourth as large as the chroniclers would have us believe, was yet imposing enough to dismay the Scots leaders as they saw it approaching them at Bannockburn.

The womenfolk of Leith from some safe retreat watched the mighty host march away westwards, and trembled at the sight when they thought of their sons and husbands who had followed the banner of their gallant leader, Sir John de Lestralric, to join the king at Stirling; for Leithers in the old days, as in these, were loyally patriotic, and ever among the foremost to rally to their country's need. There was one Leither, however, a sailor, whose name, preserved for us in a pay sheet of this time, shows him to have been in the service of the English. This is not surprising, considering that they had held Leith as one of their chief bases of supplies for nearly twenty years. Nicholas of Leith, mariner, was with the English ships at Berwick, and may at this very time have come with the fleet to Leith Roads.

How unexpected must have been the sight, and how wild their joy, when these same Leith womenfolk saw some five hundred fugitive horsemen, all that was left of the flower of England's chivalry that had ridden past Leith with so brave a show some three days before, pass in headlong flight on their way towards England. They were led by a traitor Scot, and followed close at heel by the Good Lord James with some sixty men, too few to attack, but not too few to cut off stragglers and keep the main body on the move.

In spite of his crushing defeat at Bannockburn,

Edward II. obstinately refused to acknowledge Scotland as a free and independent country and Bruce as its king. The war was, therefore, resolutely carried on, mostly by invasions of England on the part of the Scots, under the gallant and skilful leadership of Douglas and Randolph. Provoked by these numerous and destructive raids, Edward determined, in 1322, on another attempt to crush Scotland. This invasion brings Leith once more into notice, for here Edward encamped for three days to await the arrival of his fleet with supplies. Bruce followed the tactics Wallace employed against Edward I. before the Battle of Falkirk. All cattle, corn, and food of every kind were secreted far from the English line of march. All merchandise was, no doubt, stored within the Castle. Edward found no cattle in Lothians save one cow too lame to be driven away like the others.

But where did the people of Edinburgh and Leith betake themselves? During an English invasion some sixty years later it is recorded that they transported themselves and their goods across the Forth, previously carrying off the straw roofs of their dwellings, so that when the English entered they found only roofless and empty houses. But the Leithers did not always betake themselves so far in times of invasion, for there were many safe retreats among the woods, marshes, and lakes by which the Leith and Edinburgh of those early centuries were surrounded, and to which Edinburgh may have owed its name of Lislebourg, so persistently used by Queen Mary, Mary of Guise, and the French of the sixteenth century.

Starvation compelled the English to retreat; but before doing so, to the horror of the whole neighbourhood and the grief of the people of North Leith, the

English, as Fordoun, the father of Scottish history and the greatest of our old-time Scots chroniclers, tells us, "sacked and plundered the monastery of Holyrood, and brought it to great desolation," for Edward II. lacked not only the wisdom but also the piety of his father, Longshanks, who was ever a devoted worshipper of the saints and a lover of monasteries. Then the Leithers returned, and quickly and easily rethatched their dwellings, and settled down to the old way of life, to work with redoubled energy to repair their losses ; for in those days, as, indeed, all through their history, Leithers had to, and did, live up to their town motto of "Persevere."

Standing as it did in close proximity to Edinburgh, the goal of most invading English armies, and never possessing, except for a very short period, any protecting walls, Leith suffered even more than Edinburgh at the hands of the "auld enemy." Her houses, largely composed of timber or rude stonework and thatch, were easily and speedily restored. They had certainly no architectural beauty. The ordinary houses of those days were little better than huts, with little furniture and less comfort ; but as Leithers had never known anything better, these troubles distressed them little. Such frequent dislocation of their trade and commerce, however, must have greatly retarded the progress of their town. At last the English recognized that their only wise course was to acknowledge Scotland's independence, which they did by the Treaty of Northampton in 1328, when Scotland gained all she had striven for, and Bruce just saw the accomplishment of his great life work, for he died the following year.

And then it seemed as if all King Robert's great work was about to be undone, for the peace concluded

at Northampton lasted only two years. Edward III. now repudiated what the English called the "shameful treaty" of Northampton. Edward Baliol claimed the throne, and Edward III., hoping, like his grandfather, to become Scotland's overlord, aided him, and once more the land was cruelly devastated by English invasion. In 1335 Edward III. ordered Edinburgh Castle to be rebuilt and fortified, and for this purpose much Eastland timber was brought into Leith and then transported to Edinburgh. The work was carried out under Sir John de Stirling, an exceedingly able and active officer, who, on taking over his command, reported that there was no dwelling in the said Castle save a little chapel (St. Margaret's), partly unroofed, showing with what reverence Randolph had preserved it, and how completely he had destroyed the Castle as a fortress. Stirling's accounts, still preserved, form a valuable record of the condition of things in our neighbourhood under English rule.

Sir John de Lestralric and his companion-in-arms, Geoffrey of Duddingston, were now dead, whether slain in battle against the English or not we have now no means of knowing. Each had been succeeded by his son—true "chips of the old blocks," for both were forfeited for loyally and nobly supporting the cause of Scotland and freedom against Edward III., while many renegade Scots saved their estates by taking the English side. With the English garrison in Edinburgh Castle were some twenty Scotsmen, of whom not one belonged to either Leith or Restalrig, showing that the hearts of his vassals were with their forfeited lord.

Leith now once again became the chief port on the east coast for English supplies, and here the English occupied De Lestralric's house, but whether as a place

of residence for their garrison or as a storehouse for supplies—more probably the latter—we are not told. The names of many of the ships bringing supplies from the south to Leith are recorded—such as the *Mariola*, *St. Nicholas*, and the *Goddys Grace*—their saintly names in no way deterring their captains and crews from indulging in a little piracy when occasion offered.

Sir John de Stirling commandeered a fleet of eighteen boats from Cramond, Musselburgh, and other places, to be moored at Leith for the use of his garrison, and now and again the governor's account books give us a peep at the rather exciting incidents Leith sometimes experienced during the English occupation. Sir Andrew Murray of Bothwell, the courageous son of the heroic companion of Wallace, was besieging Cupar Castle in Fife, skilfully defended for the English by William Bulloch, a clergyman of great military talent who had mistaken his calling. Sir John de Stirling determined to cross the Scots Water—that is, the Firth of Forth—and relieve it. For this purpose he had gathered together at Leith a fleet of thirty-two vessels and two hundred and twenty-four mariners. Suddenly crossing the Forth with the whole of the Edinburgh garrison, he successfully accomplished the relief of Bulloch, and returned to Leith within the marvellously short space of four days. But then Edward III., unlike his grandfather, knew how to choose his officers.

Sir John de Stirling, however, skilful commander as he was, had still more skilful opponents, for at this time Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie, whose ruined castle still stands above the waters of the South Esk at Cockpen, had gathered together a band of homeless patriots, among whom, perhaps, were the young De Lestralric, and the lords of Duddingston, Craigmillar, Liberton,



Braid, Dean, Inverleith, and Pilton—all forfeited and outlawed at this time for their resistance to English aggression. They had their fastness within the ancient caves among the cliffs at Hawthornden, near Roslin. From these, at unexpected times, they would pounce down upon the soldiers of Sir John Stirling as they convoyed supplies between Leith and Edinburgh for the Castle garrison. Sir Alexander Ramsay was one of the most distinguished warriors of that time, and he and his outlawed troop were worthy successors of those who had won Bannockburn. They were the heroes of many daring deeds. With such men as these on the patriotic side, and such women as "Black Agnes" to inspire them with courage, the English and Baliol soon lost their hold in Scotland when their garrisons were driven out of Edinburgh and Leith.

In April 1341 Edinburgh Castle was captured by a clever stratagem planned by Bulloch (who had been won over to the Scots side), Sir William Douglas the Black Knight of Liddesdale, and other heroes, aided by three Edinburgh merchant burgesses, William Fairley, Walter Curry, and William Bartholomew. A merchant ship belonging to Walter Curry was freighted from Dundee with a cargo of provisions for Leith. At Dundee they privately received aboard their ship Douglas, Bulloch, and some two hundred other bold and daring spirits, and, under pretence of being English merchantmen—they had shaved their beards in the Anglo-Norman manner—anchored off Leith. They then offered for sale to the English commander of Edinburgh Castle their cargo of "biscuit, wine, and strong beer all excellently spiced," and were told to bring it to the Castle at an early hour in the morning, "lest they should be intercepted by Dalhousie and other Scottish knaves."

Early next morning the laden wagons set out from the Shore under the care of armed men disguised as sailors, and eventually reached the Castle. The gates were at once opened, and at the entrance the wagons were so halted that it was impossible either to close them or to let down the portcullis.

A shrill blast from a bugle-horn brought Douglas and his friends, who were lurking in the neighbourhood. After a desperate conflict the garrison was overpowered. In this way Leith and Edinburgh were freed from English rule until the days of Cromwell. The descendants of William Fairley long held the estates of Braid and Bruntsfield, but now live in Ayrshire. The merchant booths of Fairley, Curry, and William Bartholomew were the last three on the south side of the High Street, just before coming to St. Giles' Church. Walter Curry's, the last of the three, stood exactly where the City Cross stands now. How many Leith and Edinburgh people who pass this spot to-day know aught of these three merchants who had their booths here, and who on that early morning some six hundred years ago played so heroic a part in their country's story ?



LINTEL FROM AN OLD EDINBURGH MERCHANT'S BOOTH, BURGESS CLOSE.

## Chapter V.

### THE LOGANS.

IN Chapter IV. we read of how Sir John de Lestallric became one of Bruce's earliest and staunchest friends in his struggle against Edward II. His son, another Sir John, was equally loyal to David II. in the struggle against Baliol and Edward III., and joined the gallant Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie in attacking English convoys passing to and fro between Leith and Edinburgh Castle. According to the popular story Sir John, who fought by Bruce's side at Bannockburn, was the last of the male line of the De Lestallrics, and his daughter and heiress married the Sir Robert Logan who accompanied the Good Lord James on his expedition to the Holy Land with the heart of Robert Bruce. For this service the Logans bear a man's heart in their coat-of-arms, both Sir Robert and his brother Sir Walter having been slain along with their heroic leader, as Barbour tells us in his noble and inspiring poem. It was, however, the grandson of this Sir Robert Logan who founded the family of the Logans of Restalrig. This grandson, another Sir Robert, married Katharine, the only daughter of Sir John de Lestallric, who died in 1382, and who, and not the Sir John mentioned above, was the last of the male line. By this marriage the barony of Restalrig,

of which, as we know, South Leith was a part, came into the possession of the Logans.

The first Logan of Restalrig was to prove an ill friend to Leith, perhaps because he lacked that generous nature which had made his ancestor the chosen friend of the noble Douglas and his gallant company. For it was owing to this new overlord, the first of the Logans of Restalrig, considering only his own advantage in his dealings with the merchant burgesses of Edinburgh, and giving no thought to those of his vassals in Leith, that the city got her first hold on the lands, as distinct from the harbour, of Leith.

The harbour of Leith had belonged to the burgesses of Edinburgh from a very early date ; but during the War of Independence, as we have already seen, it had been taken possession of by the English, and became their chief port on the east coast for furnishing their garrisons with supplies and munitions of war. After his victory at Bannockburn, Bruce restored the harbour to the burgh of Edinburgh. As their charter granting them the right of possession had been lost or destroyed in the turmoil and devastation of the long war, Bruce confirmed and renewed it in 1329, just before his death. But while the harbour belonged to Edinburgh, the river bank, at what is now the Shore, was owned by the Logans, and Sir Robert Logan's sale of his feudal rights to the city was to bring centuries of trouble to the inhabitants of Leith, as we shall see later. It is for this reason that we in Leith look back upon this first Logan of Restalrig as no friend to the town it was his duty to foster and protect.

Sir Robert Logan was one of the leading men of the land, and in his time had held high office in the State. He had taken a leading share in the stormy life of the





time. He was now advanced in years, and his old age was not without sorrow, for his eldest son had died before him. This would seem to have given his thoughts a graver turn, and to have brought him more under the influence of the Church. And in order that he and his might be for ever remembered in the prayers of grateful souls, he founded in Leith in 1430 the Hospital of St. Anthony, where the Logans were "to be prayit for ilk Sunday till the day of doom" by the beneficiaries of his charity. He died in the year 1439, when his many possessions were divided among his four grandsons, two only of whom concern our story. Sir John, the eldest, succeeded him in the barony of Restalrig, and, like Thomas de Lestralric, his ancestor of the twelfth century, held the high office of Sheriff of Edinburgh.

On William, his second grandson, Sir Robert bestowed the lands of Coatfield, which extended from the Vaults in Giles Street round the Links by Hermitage Hill and Prospect Bank to the Clockmill Burn beyond Seafield. This William thus became the founder of the Logans of Coatfield, whose great mansion, known as Coatfield's Lodging, stood amid its flowers and trees behind the Kirkgate, between Coatfield Lane and South Leith Church. The laird was usually called the Goodman of Coatfield, just as James V., when he wandered about in disguise among his subjects, often took the name of "The Goodman of Ballangeich." "Goodman" was a Scots title given to a landowner who held his estates, not from the Crown like the lairds of Restalrig, but from a king's vassal, as the lairds of Coatfield did from the barons of Restalrig, who held their lands from the Crown.

The Logans of Coatfield became very closely identified with the commercial life of Leith. Like the more famous Bartons, with whom they seem to have intermarried, for

the same names recur in both families, they became sea captains, sailing their own ships and joining their friends the Bartons in their plunder of the Portuguese. But after the Reformation the public conscience began to look on such semi-piratical enterprises in a very different light from that of past days. In 1561 the Lords of the Queen's Privy Council forbade the Bartons and the



THE COALHILL AND THE OLD BRIGEND.

*(From a painting in the possession of Mr. William Taylor, Leith.)*

Logans to fit out any more such expeditions against the Portuguese, whom the family of the Bartons had despoiled in this way for over eighty years. James IV. in his endeavours to build up a Scottish navy had no greater friends and helpers in the work than the sailormen of Leith. He was a frequent visitor at Coatfield Lodging, where he sometimes stood as godfather at the baptism of the children, and a generous godfather he

always proved, for James IV. was ever open-handed among his friends.

The next generation of the Logans was to see another branch of the family established in Leith, for Sir John, the sheriff, bestowed on his second son James the lands stretching from the Brigend to Leith Mills, where they nestled by the Water of Leith at the foot of a steep descent, now part of the lower end of Ballantyne Road. They were reached by what is now Mill Lane, then a country by-way, beautiful in summer with hawthorn and wild rose, along which the click-clack of the mill-wheel, as it was turned by the water of the lade, fell pleasantly on the ear.

This James Logan had evidently been endowed with all the better qualities of his race, for he became deputy sheriff to his father and was knighted by King James IV. In Leith Sir James must have been familiarly known as the Shirra. He built his mansion where St. Thomas's Church now stands, a somewhat hilly region; and to the lands around his turreted dwelling the people of Leith gave the name of his office, and called them the Shirra Brae, the familiar designation even to-day among Leithers for the Sheriff Brae.

The fateful Battle of Flodden was to bring "dool and wae" to Restalrig, as it did to Edinburgh, for the Baron of Restalrig (another Sir John, and nephew of the Laird of Shirra Brae) and Maister Thomas Dickson, the dean of its collegiate church, were both among those who fell for the defence and love of their king

"In the stern strife and carnage drear  
Of Flodden's fatal field."

And strangely enough the only memorial of the Logans surviving at Restalrig to-day is the tombstone of this Sir John's widow, Janet Ker, who died in 1526.

To our modern notions it seems highly inconsistent with the ministerial office to find a clergyman donning armour and sallying forth sword in hand to battle, but the Dean of Restalrig was only one of several great churchmen who fought and fell on Flodden Edge. David Strachan, the dean's servitor and a non-combatant in the fight, returned with the doleful news, but who else from Restalrig followed them the "ill road" to the Border no tradition has come down to tell us. Masses for their souls were sung in Restalrig church.

The next laird, Sir Robert, as most of the barons of Restalrig were named, was a mere youth when his father was killed; but his great-uncle, Sir James of the Shirra Brae, proved a wise and faithful adviser, and the young laird and his widowed mother never lacked a true friend while he continued to live. After the death of his lady mother in 1526 the young laird married Elizabeth Home, the heiress of Fast Castle, on which, as "Wolf's Crag," Sir Walter Scott has conferred an immortality of fame in his *Bride of Lammermoor*.

Fast Castle, so strongly perched on its isolated cliff overlooking the surging waters of the North Sea, and the lands that went with it, were now added to the other Logan possessions. The Homes were as fierce and turbulent a clan as any on the Border. Whether it was owing to the mingling of their wild blood with that of the Logans or not, certain it is that from this time some evil genius seemed to influence the family fortunes, and the malign fate that seemed to pursue Edgar Ravenswood, Scott's imaginary owner of "Wolf's Crag," is only an exaggerated picture of the evil fortune that followed the Logans after this marriage with the heiress of Fast Castle.

The barons of Restalrig began to decline in power

and influence. The times were evil. Queen Elizabeth now occupied the English throne, and England was no longer the "auld enemy" she had been for so many centuries. But Scotland, freed from the fear of English invasion, now turned her arms against herself. The country was convulsed with the strife between the party of the Reformers and that of Mary of Guise, and Leith was the centre of the struggle. The next Baron of Restalrig wavered in his allegiance between the two parties, and finally joined Mary of Guise in Leith. This Sir Robert was a man neither prudent nor fortunate, John Knox tells us. Knox was harsh and uncharitable in his judgment of those opposed to him, but we know from other sources that his estimate of the character of this Sir Robert Logan was even more kindly worded than it might have been. It was he who sold the lands of South Leith to Mary of Guise in 1555. To the merchant burgesses of Edinburgh he proved a turbulent and dangerous neighbour, but he died early in life in 1561.

The last of the family to own Restalrig was the son of this Sir Robert. He joined the party of Queen Mary against the king's men, and aided Kirkcaldy of Grange and Maitland of Lethington in holding Edinburgh Castle in her name when she was a prisoner in England. On the surrender of the Castle in 1573 he fell into the hands of the Regent Morton along with the other Castilians, as Kirkcaldy's party was called. He escaped the fate of his leader because of his youth. If his father had little prudence this Sir Robert had none at all, for he has been described by one who knew him as "ane godles, drunken and deboshit man." His evil courses led him into debt, and brought his family, for a time at least, to poverty and exile. To pay his debts he had to part with most of his estates. Some of these were bought



by his relations, the Logans of Coatfield, a family that had risen in wealth through joining in the shipping trade of the Port while the fortunes of their chiefs, the lairds of Restalrig, were declining.

Part of Restalrig was sold to Lord Balmerino, a family to whom fortune was to prove even more unkind than to the Logans, and part, the lands of Craigentenny, to James Nisbet, an enterprising and successful Edinburgh merchant like the rest of his race. They all became men of wealth. They were well known in shipping circles on the Shore of Leith, from which their father, the "weil-beluvit Henry Nisbet," Provost of Edinburgh, had voyaged to arrange commercial treaties both with France and the Netherlands. Sir Robert Logan died in 1606. Two years later it was asserted, whether truly or falsely has never been determined, that he had been implicated in that mysterious plot, the Gowrie Conspiracy, when what still remained of his estates was confiscated and the family outlawed. At the same time Parliament declared that the Logans of Coatfield had taken no part whatever in the plots and intrigues of their chief and superior. In 1616, however, the sentence of forfeiture and outlawry against the family was reversed, and some portion of his Berwickshire estates were restored to Logan's sons. For this reason the Restalrig Logans are now a Berwickshire family, where they take their place among the most important and influential of the country gentry. A branch of the family from that county, the Logans of Edrom, have a large enclosed burial-place in Restalrig Churchyard to-day.

The fact that three different branches of the Logan family were connected with Leith—the Logans of Restalrig, the Logans of Coatfield, and the Logans of Shirra Brae—has led to some confusion in our local history,

which does not seem to have known of the reversion of the sentence of outlawry against the so-called conspirator's family, and has hardly been aware of the existence of the Logans of Shirra Brae. Sir Robert's grandson married an Isobel Fowler, heiress, say some, of a Ludovic Fowler of Burncastle, near Lauder, while others hold



**MANSSION OF THE LOGANS OF SHERIFF BRAE.**

*(From a drawing in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries.)*

her to have been the daughter of Ludovic Fowler, portioner or small landowner in Restalrig. Lochside Cottage, the old thatched house with the picturesque penthouse over its main doorway, that still stands at Lochend, might well have been the dwelling of a portioner of Restalrig nearly three centuries ago.

As everyone knows, there is a famous maiden of Scottish song known as "Tibbie Fowler of the Glen," who was endowed with much wealth but little beauty. Her

wealth, however, brought her lovers if her looks did not, and Tibbie was besieged with wooers. Now, according to Leith tradition, this much-courted lass lived in the great mansion that once stood at the head of what is now Sheriff Brae, and had for so many generations belonged to a branch of the Logans. Tradition further asserts that George, a son of the forfeited conspirator, repaired his fallen fortunes by winning the hand of the wealthy Tibbie, to the utter discomfiture of the rest of the “ane-and-forty wooin’ at her,” and that with Tibbie’s tocher he built the large house from which he could view all that chanced between it and the mouth of the harbour.

The great mansion-house of the Logans of Sheriff Brae, like Pilrig and other old Scots manor-houses, was decorated with the initials of the owner and his wife. These carved stones are now built into the rear of St. Thomas’s manse, but the initials inscribed on them are certainly not those of George Logan and the weel-tochered Tibbie. They are those of John Logan of Couston, in Linlithgowshire, and his wife, Mary Caire, who either rebuilt or repaired their mansion on the Sheriff Brae in 1636. Their son James was the last of the Logans to be connected with Leith. The house and grounds were eventually bought by Sir John Gladstone in 1840, and on their site he erected St. Thomas’s Church and schools as a memorial of his own and his father Thomas’s connection with Leith.

There were now three lords of the manor in Restalrig instead of one—the Lords Balmerino, Sir William Purves of Abbeyhill, the persecutor of the Covenanters, and the Nisbets of Craigentenny, of whom the first laird, James, having purchased the lands from the notorious Sir Robert, the last of Restalrig, built thereon what is now

the oldest and most interesting of the Restalrig mansions that still survive, the much gabled and turreted house of Craigentenny, surrounded by old and widespreading elms and enclosed by grim and forbidding-looking walls.

From the deserted air that always seems to haunt it, Craigentenny House has something of mystery about it



CRAIGENTENNY HOUSE.

to the wayfarer whom chance or curiosity brings into its neighbourhood. No Nisbet lives there to-day. Their only memorials now at Craigentenny are an inscribed panel in one of the rooms and the shield over what was once its main entrance, and on which had been carved their coat-of-arms. The Lords Balmerino, the Nisbets,

and Sir William Purves, all "sat" in South Leith Church, and adhered to the policy of the Stuart kings in Church and State, rather than to that of the Covenanters. When the Church of Scotland was made Episcopalian, in accordance with the policy of Charles II., Lord Balmerino, Sir Patrick Nisbet of Craigentenny, and Sir William Purves of Abbeyhill became its staunch supporters in South Leith. The Nisbets died out in 1764, when Craigentenny became the property of William Miller, the Quaker seed merchant of what is now Holyrood Road. It was his son and heir, William Henry Miller, who bequeathed so much money to build the beautiful mausoleum beneath which he now lies, and which forms such an arresting object in the landscape to all who pass to Portobello by car.



THE OLD THATCHED HOUSE AT LOCHEND.



## Chapter VI.

### THE ENMITY WITH EDINBURGH: ITS ORIGIN.

A GOOD deal of more or less unfriendly feeling has always existed between Edinburgh and Leith. When we begin to inquire into the matter we find that they are "auld enemies" whose unfriendliness has its roots far back in Scottish history. In Queen Mary's time the jealousy and ill-feeling between Edinburgh and Leith were much keener than they are to-day, for the Lords of the Congregation, protesting against the French occupation of the town in 1559, wrote: "It is not unknown to the most part of this realm that there hath been an old hatred and contention betwixt Edinburgh and Leith, Edinburgh continually seeking to possess the liberty which by donation (= gift) of ancient kings they have long enjoyed, and Leith, on the contrary, aspiring to a liberty and freedom in prejudice of Edinburgh."

Now let us inquire into the cause of this unfriendly feeling that had made the two towns "auld enemies" for many centuries even before the days of Queen Mary. We saw in the last chapter that Edinburgh's first hold on Leith began in very early times, and that, after the country had settled down from the turmoil and strife of the War of Independence, that hold, through bargains with the Logans, gradually became stronger and stronger until it embraced the whole town except St. Anthony's.

And then, an English writer tells us, the Edinburghers, in their dealings with Leith, behaved in a way that defies any kind of explanation. This is a popular and widespread belief, but that it is quite an erroneous one, this and the following three chapters will endeavour to show.

It has always been believed that the long-standing ill-feeling between the Leithers and their neighbours of Edinburgh had its origin in the fact of Leith being Edinburgh's vassal and in the restricted freedom which vassalage entailed. Now this is entirely to misunderstand the relationship that once existed between the two towns, for friction and ill-feeling would still have arisen between them even if Edinburgh had never had any feudal superiority or charter rights over the lands of Leith. The beginning of the unfriendly feeling was not owing to the fact of Leith being the vassal of Edinburgh, but to that system of trading in the Middle Ages under which Leith was Edinburgh's port.

Their disagreement had to do with "this liberty, the donation of ancient kings," which Edinburgh had so long enjoyed at the expense of Leith, and from any share in which the latter was entirely shut out. Leith had on this account a decided grievance against the burgesses of old-time Edinburgh, just a bit puffed up and overbearing through the many special privileges they enjoyed, and from which they jealously excluded Leithers and all other "unfreemen." These privileges enjoyed by Edinburgh, but denied to Leith, were in accordance with the spirit of the age, when fair rivalry in trade was not only unknown, but altogether undesired, and a thing to be put down with the utmost rigour of the law.

Now what was this mediæval system of trading under which the free or royal burghs like Edinburgh enjoyed

so many trade privileges, and which placed so many restrictions on the commercial activities of "unfree" towns like Leith? But before we can answer that question we must know what is meant by a free or royal burgh like Edinburgh on the one hand, and an unfree town like Leith on the other.

In our story of how the De Lestralrics became possessed of the barony of Restalrig we found that under the feudal system there were tenants-in-chief, or great, or king's vassals, who held their land from the king. But the king kept much land—the royal demesne or domain it was called—in different parts of the country in his own hands, and, just as the great vassals built on their estates castles or peel towers for defence, round whose sheltering walls villages and towns gradually arose, so the king had castles like that of Edinburgh, and under the shadow of their protecting walls towns also grew up. The name burgh—a word which means a castle, a walled town or stronghold—was especially given to those towns that grew up round a castle, whether of king or noble.

In those distant days, when merchants transported goods from one part of the country to another, a tax called toll had usually to be paid to the overlords of the baronies through which the goods passed; and, in the purchase or sale of merchandise in any town or market, another tax or toll called customs had to be paid at the tolbooth of the town. A tolbooth, although it became much more in later centuries, was at first simply the building where these taxes or customs were paid, and for that reason Wycliff's Bible tells us that Jesus called Matthew "sitting at a tolbooth," and most Scots towns have a Tolbooth Wynd, where the tolbooth once stood, as in Leith, or where it still stands, as in the Canon-gate, Edinburgh.

All towns were either part of the royal domain, and were for that reason known as royal burghs, and had the right of trading anywhere throughout the land without paying toll; or were part of the barony of some noble, abbot, or bishop, in which case they were called burghs of barony, and had no such trading rights. If a burgh rose a step higher than the burghs of barony, and approached the privileges the royal burghs pos-



TOLBOOTH WYND.

sessed in trading anywhere within the land exempt from toll, it was designated a burgh of regality. Edinburgh with its king's castle was a royal burgh; the Canon-gate, which had grown up under the fostering care of the Abbot of Holyrood, was, by the charter of David I., a burgh of regality; and Dalkeith was a burgh of barony; but poor Leith seems to have been the Cinderella of Scots towns, for as a town it never was a burgh at all until it became a parliamentary burgh in 1833. Burghs

of barony and burghs of regality, while enjoying much more freedom than Leith, were more or less largely under the control of their overlords, and were, therefore, called "unfree" towns. As the king could live only in one of his castles at a time, the royal burghs were, to a very large extent, left to look after themselves. They had the great privilege of self-government—that is, of choosing their own bailies and making their own laws. They were, therefore, known as "free" burghs.

The rise of these free burghs under the protection of the royal castles, where merchants could buy and sell and craftsmen follow their calling under the protection of their own burgh laws, was really the beginning of progress and civilization in Scotland as in every other country. To carry on trade and manufacture goods requires capital; and no man can gather capital or goods and hand these on to his children if they are to be carried off by his overlord at his death. No trading class could arise at all until this privilege of inheriting property was secured, and this right was only completely enjoyed in the king's free burghs. When David I., therefore, conferred upon Edinburgh the great privileges of a royal burgh he began commerce in our district, and started Leith on its career as a seaport.

To-day any one may trade freely, both at home and abroad; but in the far-off days of David I., and for many long centuries after, this privilege belonged to the merchants of free burghs only, and the country was divided into areas, in each of which a royal burgh had the monopoly of trade. Indeed, these early Scottish burghs seem to have been the only places in which trade could be lawfully carried on, and from the inhabitants of "unfree" towns like Leith, to whom they conceded



any trading rights, they exacted toll, as the trade guilds of Edinburgh did from those of Leith, for in early mediæval times no person could even follow a craft or trade outside a free burgh. This was also the early law of England, and indeed of all Western Europe. But as wealth grew and trade increased, these trade monopolies and trade restrictions became very vexatious, and the Leithers, therefore, under certain conditions, had to be allowed to open shops and sell goods with the least possible interference with the trading rights of the royal and free burgh of Edinburgh.

The district over which Edinburgh had this monopoly of trade was the Sheriffdom of Edinburgh, which stretched from the river Almond on the west to just beyond Levenhall on the east. Beyond Levenhall was the trade district of the royal burgh of Haddington, while on the west, across the Almond, was the trade precinct of the equally free burgh of Linlithgow.

But this complete control over the home trade was not the only privilege of royal burghs. They had one more at least equally great—the sole monopoly of carrying on foreign trade. None but the merchants of free burghs could engage in oversea trade. The trading powers of other burghs extended only to the right of providing themselves in the markets of the free burghs with the foreign and other produce which these favoured towns had imported, and of retailing this in their own districts, and to holding a weekly market and a yearly fair.

Of course Edinburgh had (as it still has) its weekly corn market and its Hallow Fair, held at the season of Hallow E'en. On these market days in Edinburgh the country people from the surrounding district, including Leith, brought for sale the produce of their farms, their

poultry, butter, eggs, and cheese, but had to set up their stalls on the opposite side of the street from those of the citizens. There is still a lingering remnant of this ancient weekly produce market to be seen every Saturday morning in the High Street, just below the Tron Church, where toll is still charged for the stance as was the custom in the Edinburgh of long past days.

Here, again, Leith appears as the Cinderella of Scots towns, for she had no regular weekly market, and certainly never had a fair, and, although she was for centuries the most important seaport in Scotland, no Leither was allowed any share in the overseas trade of his own town. He could neither export any goods to, nor import them from, foreign countries. Such trade in our district was the monopoly of the merchant burgesses of Edinburgh only.

Nor was any foreign produce allowed to be sold in Leith. An old Scots Act of Parliament declared "that no man pak nor peill" in Leith—that is, trade nor traffic in Leith. If Leithers wished to purchase any foreign produce they could only do so from Edinburgh merchants at the Cross of Edinburgh. Leithers might own or man the ships as mariners; they could be "pynouris" (the old Scots name for a dock labourer), but they could not otherwise share in the foreign trade of their own town. Such was the law of the land as enacted by the old Scots Parliament. Such a law could only be passed in a Parliament where the burgesses of royal burghs had representation and the inhabitants of unfree burghs had not. It was unjust, although few, if any, saw it exactly in that light in those times, for it supported the utterly selfish policy of giving commercial privileges to the inhabitants of royal burghs from which the rest of the nation were shut out. Such a commercial policy ruled

the trade relations between Edinburgh and Leith in some respects down to 1833, when Parliament made Leith a separate burgh.

Before a foreign-bound ship could leave the harbour of Leith its cargo had to be shipped in the presence of Edinburgh officials, who were usually members of the Town Council, including the Town Clerk, the Water Bailie, and the Dean or head of the Merchant Guild, who closely inspected each bale of goods taken on board. Only the goods of the merchant burgesses of Edinburgh were allowed to be shipped, and the owners, the skippers, and even the passengers had to receive a certificate ("the baillie's tikket") before they were permitted to set forth on their voyage. The regulations regarding incoming vessels from abroad were equally strict. On the arrival of a vessel in Leith its cargo had to be landed on the Shore, and nowhere else. Here it was carefully examined by the same city officials, who put a value upon it, for in those days the price of goods was settled by the Town Council along with the merchants at the Tolbooth, to which the merchants had to bring their cargoes, and not by competition in the open market—that is, by the law of supply and demand. This control of prices was very necessary in those days, when all trade was the monopoly of the guilds.

The cargo was then transported to the Market Cross of Edinburgh, for the purchase and sale in Leith of any imported goods was, as we have already seen, contrary to law. At the Cross they were sold to the merchants of Edinburgh, who, in turn, sold them to the people of Leith as they had need, for "all sic merchandice sould first cum and be presented to the burgh of Edinburgh, and thairefter sould be bocht fra the fremen thair of." Such was the law of the land as enacted by the old Scots

Parliament, which was no doubt largely influenced by the advice of its burgess members, who from the later years of Bruce's reign had been sent there as representatives of the interests of the royal burghs. The other burghs, including unfree towns like Leith, had no parliamentary representation.

The royal burghs thus kept the control of all trade in their own hands as far as they possibly could, and, of course, for their own benefit alone. It was a highly selfish policy, and was carried out with the most jealous and vexatious interference with all who dared to trespass upon their privileges. But that it was not so regarded in mediæval times is shown by the fact that this same commercial policy prevailed in a more or less narrow manner among all the nations of Western Europe for centuries. It must therefore have seemed to them the one best suited to the conditions under which they lived, and indeed, when we have learned something of these social conditions, we shall, perhaps, come to the conclusion that the privileged royal burghs were not quite so selfish in their trade policy as at first sight appears.

The Leithers, although not free from the same narrow notions where their own interests were concerned, not unnaturally looked on Edinburgh's regulations restricting their trading activities as unjust, and did not hesitate to evade them when opportunity offered. The merchant burgesses of Edinburgh, on the other hand, who never looked at trade questions from any but their own class point of view, held fast by the privileges the law and their own charters conferred upon them, and were jealously watchful for any breach of them by the unfreemen of Leith. There was therefore constant bickering between the two towns; indeed, it would

have been strange had it been otherwise. It is to the narrow and selfish trade policy of mediæval times, therefore, that we must look for the beginnings of that jealous feeling so long existing between Edinburgh and Leith, which left a legacy of suspicion that has not yet quite died out.

Down to 1597, when James VI. brought Scotland into line with other countries in the matter of trade policy, no duties, except, of course, local harbour dues, were charged on imports. Scotland's import trade was therefore conducted on a free trade policy. But in old-time Scotland they believed in making "the foreigner pay" by charging him duties on what was taken out of the country—that is, on exports. These duties were known as the "great customs." From the customs duties on exports was derived the greater part of the royal revenue, and for this reason, if for no other, foreign trade had to be so regulated that the king should not in any way be defrauded of his customs duties.

It was for this reason that foreign trade was restricted to the royal burghs and their seaports under the king's own immediate rule. In all such towns officials known as "custumars" were appointed, whose duty it was to collect the king's customs—the persons chosen being usually two of the leading merchant burgesses of the burgh. It was the duty of these custumars to see that no goods were shipped to foreign countries without the payment of the fixed duties, and only when these were paid did the owner receive the "baillie's tikket," which allowed him to proceed on his voyage. Had foreign trade in that age been open to all and sundry who wished to engage in it, it would have been impossible with the limited means of those days to control the collection of the export duties for the king's revenue.



Even restricted as the foreign trade of the country was in the interest of the king and the free burghs, we find James IV. declaring in 1506, "We are greittumlie defraudit in our customes through pakking and peiling (that is, buying and selling) of strangearis (that is, foreigners) guidis in Leyth unenterit to our burgh of Edinburgh." You remember that all foreign imports immediately they were landed on the Shore were transported to Edinburgh, and there only could Leithers purchase them, not from the "strangearis" who brought them, but only from the merchants of the city who bought them. Now, judged by the conditions under which we live to-day, such a law seems harsh and tyrannical; but it was not really so except in the high-handed way in which it was sometimes enforced, as the Leithers knew very well, although they might do their best to evade it.



MERCAT CROSS, OLD EDINBURGH,  
where the cargoes of Leith ships were sold.

## Chapter VII.

### THE ENMITY WITH EDINBURGH: ITS DEVELOPMENT.

THE mediæval laws that made all overseas trade a monopoly of the merchants of royal burghs can only be understood when we remember how heavy was the price paid for those special privileges enjoyed by free burghs like Edinburgh, in which the inhabitants of all other burghs and unfree towns like Leith bore no share. The jealous way in which Edinburgh guarded its privileges against any encroachment on the part of the unfreemen of Leith shows how burdensome the royal burghs felt the cost at which these privileges were obtained. It was to meet the heavy charges laid on them by the king in return for the many rights and privileges gifted to them by royal charters that no "pakking or peiling" was permitted in Leith, and that all ships' cargoes had to be taken to Edinburgh as soon as they were landed on the Shore, and be disposed of at the City Cross. For all goods on entering the city gates, or on being weighed at the "tron" or public weighing beam just within, had to pay toll and dues.

These were called the petty customs, and went to the common good of the burgh. From these petty customs, their chief source of revenue—for there were no taxes then as we understand them to-day—the city

fathers paid very largely the financial burdens laid on the good town by the king. The greater the trade the greater the income from this source. To this cause, therefore, was due the jealous insistence of the burgesses of Edinburgh that all merchandise shipped to or from Leith should pass through the Edinburgh market, so that all dues on its sale and purchase might be accurately assessed.

"The indwellaris of Leyth," so runs a regulation of 1558, "may on na wyis buy wool, hydes, claith, skin, salmond, wyne, walx, victuellis, or ony maner of stapill gudis fra unfremen in the countrie, but all sic merchandice and gudis aucht and sould be brocht to the said burgh as principal stapill thereof, and there to pack and peill the samin and pay their customis and dewties thairfor." "Staple" goods were taken to be all those on which custom was payable to the Crown. They were the goods in which only the merchant burgesses of royal burghs could trade, and generally included all exports to, and imports from, foreign lands. The words, "the said burgh as principal stapill thereof" in the regulation just quoted, show that the word was also used to designate the market to which staple goods must be brought in order to be rated and charged with the dues payable to the king and the burgh.

In preventing the people of Leith from sharing in any way in their privileges, the burgesses of Edinburgh were only acting in accordance with the customs and law of mediæval times, which allowed to vassals no more rights than their overlords chose to give them. In 1485 the Town Council of Edinburgh enacted that none of "the common rentis" (the rents of the town's mills, ferries, common pasture lands like the Links, and the petty customs which were often farmed out to the highest

bidder) be let to any Leith man, and that no merchant of Edinburgh was to take into partnership any "indweller" of the town of Leith. One begins to wonder how the poor Leithers made their living at all. We are filled with indignation at what seems to us in our more enlightened age the most oppressive tyranny, and, as Leithers, we naturally picture the provost and magistrates of Edinburgh in all their dealings with Leith in those far-off days as actuated by the utmost ill-will.

Now in thinking thus we should be unjust to those Old Edinburgh city fathers, and totally misunderstand their reasons for enacting such laws, which must be interpreted, not by the conditions under which we live to-day, but by those prevailing in the old unhappy, far-off days of the Leith of mediæval times, when they will appear in quite another light. With us to-day the country is governed as one whole by king and Parliament on the principle of equal rights for all, but it was not so in mediæval times, when every overlord ruled his own barony, and allowed his vassals just such rights as he thought fit, or as they were able to obtain from him by purchase. And Edinburgh was now overlord or feudal superior of Leith through her purchase of all the feudal rights of the Logan family.

Edinburgh's rights and privileges as a royal burgh had been obtained at heavy cost and in return for burdensome obligations. Among these was that of "watching and warding"—that is, of taking their turn in guarding their city by night—a very burdensome duty, for there were no police in old-time Edinburgh and Leith. Then, again, as a royal burgh the city, like the great nobles, was a tenant-in-chief of the king, and had to be ready at any moment "weel bodin in fear of weir"—that is, well armed for war—to follow the king's

standard whenever their services were required. Edinburgh has a noble record in loyal observance of this duty, to which she owes some of her most cherished traditions. The inhabitants of Leith, as the vassals of the lands of Restalrig, and from the days of Queen Mary of the city itself, were under no such obligation. For a Leither, then, to be taken into partnership by a merchant of Edinburgh was for him to enjoy all the privileges which had cost the city so much to acquire, without at the same time sharing any of the burdens those privileges entailed.

That would plainly have been a very one-sided bargain. Leithers, who were men of substance, would no doubt gladly have shared in the responsibilities as well as the benefits enjoyed by Edinburgh; but then they would have been no longer Leithers, for, as we have seen before, a burgess could not fulfil the obligations burgess-ship imposed unless he resided within the burgh itself. To live anywhere else outside was to lose one's rights, and become "unfree."

Edinburgh merchants might, and did, have their booths and offices in Leith, as an old door lintel in Burgess Street, now so wantonly destroyed, once reminded us. They, however, were not allowed to dwell there, as they could not then discharge their duties as burgesses, but had to "remane and mak residence in the burgh, and walk with the utheris nychtbouris burgessis and gyf thay fail heirintill thay in all tymes efter sall be repute and haldin as unfreemen." In 1580 the city officer was sent by the magistrates of Edinburgh to warn John Williamson, living in Leith, that "he forfeited his burgess-ship, liberty, and freedome of the burgh for nocht remaining nor making his residence within."

In the chapter dealing with Leith's early commerce



we read that the voyage of a merchant ship across the North Sea was indeed, as it was customary to name it, a "wyld aventour," for in addition to the dangers from stormy seas, so much greater in days when there were neither charts, buoys, nor friendly lighthouses to guide the mariner on his course, there were the pirates of all nations ever on the watch for ships freighted with rich cargoes. In engaging in foreign trade, therefore, a merchant was in great peril of losing both life and goods, and he naturally wished in such circumstances that his profits should be such as would compensate him for his many risks.

Now his profits at the best, when all these risks are taken into account, were by no means large, and if all and sundry had been allowed to engage in the pursuit of foreign commerce these profits might have vanished altogether, and overseas trade by Scotsmen might have ceased entirely, as it did in the time of Alexander III., or the quality of the goods exported (a genuine concern to the free burghs) might, for the sake of extra gain, have become so inferior as to destroy their reputation for honest dealing, and so endanger their overseas trade. The trade monopoly of Edinburgh, therefore, and of the other favoured burghs seemed to our ancestors of mediæval Scotland, and indeed of Western Europe for that matter, the only means by which foreign trade and commerce could be built up and maintained under the conditions of their time, and in this we must allow them to be better judges than we to-day.

But, like all other privileges, it was clung to long after it had outrun its usefulness, and in later centuries became a hindrance rather than a help to our growing trade. It had undergone modification before our Scots Parliament was merged into the larger Parliament of

Great Britain, and when that event opened the commerce of England and her colonies to Leith shipping, the exclusive trading rights of Edinburgh could no longer be continued, although one of the provisions of the Treaty of Union guaranteed to the royal burghs all their former privileges. They still endeavoured to regulate foreign trade by the laws of more primitive days ; but opposing forces became too strong for them, although they struggled hard and long to uphold what they considered their rights in this matter. In 1755 the Court of Session decided that a free burgh like Edinburgh might seize and confiscate any "unfree" goods brought into its trade area by Leithers and others, but could not otherwise hinder their importation. Not even Edinburgh had a sufficient staff of watchers to carry out this duty, and so the long and bitter struggle between her and Leith over her exclusive rights of foreign trade, which had gone on from time immemorial, gradually came to an end.

From 1755 Leithers, in the matter of shipping, became free to trade with all the world. Old-time notions, however, die hard, and, until the harbour and docks passed from the controlling hands of Edinburgh into those of the Dock Commission in 1826, Leith merchants and shipowners, in all manner of harbour and other dues, had to pay at a much higher rate than those of Edinburgh. The removal of this unjust differentiation against all traders save those of Edinburgh, and the new and progressive spirit of the administration of the Dock Commission, has, with other causes, led to such a rapid increase in the shipping trade of the Port that there has been a continuous dock development from that date till now to meet the larger needs of Leith's ever-growing trade.

## Chapter VIII.

### THE OVERLORDSHIP OF EDINBURGH.

IN the last chapter we saw how Leith at last freed herself from the shackles by which Edinburgh had for so many long centuries restricted her from almost any share in the shipping trade of her own harbour. But Edinburgh, in another way, still continued to hamper Leith's activities, for, from the closing years of the fourteenth century, she began to have another hold on Leith which tightened more and more as the years passed, and held her in an even more galling bondage than that of being excluded from any share in the foreign trade of her own harbour.

In being shut out from engaging in the overseas trade of their own port Leithers were no worse off than the inhabitants of other unfree ports throughout the land. The Clyde burghs of Rutherglen, Renfrew, and Dumbarton did all they could to hamper and impede the trade of the unfree town of Glasgow. But there the jurisdiction of these royal burghs over Glasgow ended. They had no other rights over the good folk of this unfree port, who in all other matters were under the authority of their own overlord, the archbishop of the cathedral.

The lot of those unfree towns was happy compared with that of Leith. For not only did Edinburgh own

the harbour, and possess the sole right of carrying on all the overseas trade of the port of Leith, but by purchasing the feudal rights of the Logans and other superiors she gradually became overlord of nearly the whole town as well, and thus exercised complete authority over its inhabitants, and regulated all their doings. Leith was in the position of a serf of which Edinburgh was the owner. Serfs had really no individual rights, and therefore Leith as a town had none. Its inhabitants were for this reason looked on as unfree. No other town in Scotland had the freedom of its inhabitants so hampered and obstructed, or had its affairs so completely subjected to the selfish interests of its overlord, as were those of Leith.

From 1398 down to 1833, when Leith was made a separate burgh by Act of Parliament, the relationship between the two towns may be described as, on the one hand, the most constant and jealous interference and control on the part of Edinburgh to further what she considered her undoubted rights, and, on the other hand, an equally constant evasion of this control on every possible opportunity on the part of Leith. The Merchant Guild of Edinburgh, who alone at this time, and for the next two hundred years, monopolized the right to membership of the Town Council, thought, and no doubt rightly, that they could enforce and maintain their trade privileges in Leith all the more strongly if they, instead of the Logans, were the feudal superiors of the town.

Gradually, therefore, the whole of South Leith held by the Logans passed from the possession of the barons of Restalrig into that of the wealthy and, if truth must be told, somewhat proud and overbearing merchant burgesses of Edinburgh, who proved very exacting

overlords to the Leithers, just as they were somewhat tyrannous and oppressive in their rule of all the inhabitants of Edinburgh itself who were not fortunate enough to be members of the Merchant Guild, and whom they jealously excluded from all share in the municipal government of the city.

To the many restrictions and prohibitions upon her freedom to trade abroad, dating from the earliest years of her history—for Bruce's famous charter only confirmed what former kings had granted—we owe the origin of the unfriendly feeling between the two towns. But to the irritating and humiliating state of vassalage just described, much more than to Edinburgh's trading privileges as a royal burgh, is due that feeling of suspicion and unfriendliness that still, to some extent, exists between the two towns. The prolongation of this state of vassalage for so many years after the growing commerce of the country had rendered the trading restrictions no longer possible, added to and greatly intensified this unfriendly feeling.

The Town Council of Edinburgh, then, gradually acquired complete control of Leith and all its affairs. For this reason Leith never had a provost, magistrates, or town council of her own until she became a parliamentary burgh under the Burgh Reform Act in 1833. The records of the Town Council of Edinburgh form a rich storehouse of the city's history, and are valuable for the information they give regarding the customs and social life of its inhabitants in mediæval times. Leith, on the other hand, having been an unfree town right down to the early decades of the nineteenth century, has, of course, Town Council records from that time only, and thus what would have proved a valuable source of her early history was never written, and



so we must look for it elsewhere. The loss from 1589 is partially replaced by the records of the Sessions of South and North Leith Parish Churches. Of the former body, the two Edinburgh bailies—the Water Bailie and his Deputy—charged with the control and supervision of South Leith affairs, were members by virtue of their office.

The Session of the Parish Church, aided by the two Edinburgh bailies, strange as it may seem to us in our more democratic days, discharged many of the duties of a town council, and for over two hundred years had a considerable share in the management and direction of the public affairs of the town. Their records have been published for the period 1588–1700, and are not surpassed in the interest of their details by any similar publication for the same period. Yet few Leithers have taken the trouble to read them, and still fewer have thought them worthy of purchase. That seems altogether strange in a town that has never lacked a vigorous spirit of local patriotism.

We have learned that from the earliest days of their history, towns, like baronies, had their overlords, who held absolute sway over them and their inhabitants. As they grew in size towns became impatient of this rule, and wished to govern themselves through their corporations, as our towns do to-day. Where the king or some noble was overlord this freedom of self-government was not very difficult to obtain, for kings and nobles were often in need of money, and this need the towns under their rule were ever ready to supply in return for a larger freedom. They would advance a goodly sum to a needy king or baron in return for a document called a charter, in which the privileges to be granted them were fully detailed. Step by step in this way towns were constantly obtaining a larger meas-

ure of freedom until, as in the case of royal burghs like Edinburgh, they finally obtained self-government.

In many cases, as in that of Edinburgh, this privilege of self-government was acquired at so early a period that the charter by which it was granted has long ago disappeared. The royal burghs grew to be the largest and most important towns in the country, because they were allowed to develop freely without their industrial activities being fettered in any way by the arbitrary rule of some overlord. Baronial towns like Dalkeith were not quite so fortunate, and towns like the Canongate, which belonged to the Church, were still less so in their struggle for freedom, though continued for centuries, as rich and powerful bodies like the abbot and monks of some wealthy abbey, such as Holyrood, could not be induced to part with many of their powers by offers of money, however large.

But the lot of Church towns like the Canongate or Musselburgh was fortunate compared with that of unhappy Leith. While it was not unusual in Italy during the Middle Ages to find one town subject to another, at least for a time, so far as its outside relations were concerned, as Pisa and Lucca to Florence in the early fourteenth century, yet such a servitude, except in the case of that of Leith to Edinburgh, was unknown in Scotland. In being subject to Edinburgh, Leith was the vassal of a wealthy city corporation, proud of its possessions and privileges, whom no sum of money could tempt to part with any one of them in the smallest degree. On the contrary, in order to obtain more complete control of the harbour and its shipping, and to check any attempt of the Leithers to evade her statutes and ordinances, or to infringe her trade monopoly, it was to the interest of Edinburgh to tighten by every

means in her power, rather than to relax, her hold over her unhappy vassal, and the most effective way of doing this was to obtain possession of the town as well as of the harbour. This then became the traditional policy of the Corporation of Edinburgh, and they spent large sums of money in its pursuit.

The town of Leith in the far-off times of which we are now speaking—the closing years of the fourteenth century—was owned by three feudal superiors: the king, the Laird of Restalrig, and the Abbot of Holyrood. Edinburgh's first possessions in Leith were, of course, those of the harbour and mills gifted to her by royal charter at some period of that golden age of Scotland's history extending from the reign of David I. to the death of Alexander III.—that is, between 1124 and 1286. Mills, owing to the large revenue derived from them, were among the most valuable of an overlord's possessions. They were as prominent a feature in the Leith of the fourteenth century as they are to-day, for both the Laird of Restalrig and the Abbot of Holyrood had mills in Leith as well as the Town Council of Edinburgh. No barony, indeed, was then without its mill. Though in later years we find windmills as well, those in Leith at this time were all driven by water power, and were therefore situated somewhere by the banks of the Water of Leith; but their exact location, except in the case of one or two which were owned by the Laird of Restalrig, is unknown to-day. Bonnington Mills, which we find a possession of Holyrood from their earliest record, perhaps supplied the needs of the abbot's lands of North Leith as well as those of more outlying parts. The mills of the Laird of Restalrig, specifically known as Leith Mills, were sold to the city of Edinburgh in 1722 by Lord Balmerino.

The mills gifted to Edinburgh along with the harbour, though frequently spoken of in later years as "Leith Mills," are not so designated in Robert the Bruce's charter. Leith Mills belonged, as we have already seen, to the lairds of Restalrig. Where Edinburgh's mills were situated is not known. With the harbour they were the earliest of the city's possessions in Leith. This royal grant did not confer any right to the use of the banks of the river, and disputes arose with Sir Robert Logan, the proprietor, which were only settled by the Edinburgh authorities paying him a large sum of money for the banks, with liberty to erect wharves and quays thereon, and to make roads through the lands of Restalrig for the transport of goods and merchandise to and from the city. Their main highway became the Easter Road of later days, while the abbot and canons of Holyrood had their own approach to Leith by way of Broughton Loan and the Bonnington or Western Road, which passed through their own lands all the way to the ford and ferry across the water to North Leith.

In 1414 Edinburgh made another bargain with Sir Robert Logan, and obtained a charter from him by which he granted to the city all the land along the river bank from the abbot's lands of St. Leonards, now the Coalhill, to the mouth of the river, which was then where the Broad Wynd is now, while the waste land beyond that point, in some way unknown to us to-day, belonged to Holyrood Abbey. Up to this time the only means of access to the harbour which Logan allowed the Edinburgh burgesses was by the narrow yet quaintly picturesque Burgess Close, now widened into a street, utterly wanting in the old-world charm that graced its ancient predecessor.

The old Burgess Close, which ran south-east to the Rotten Row, now Water Street, was not for Leith folks. It contained the booths and stores of those Edinburgh burgesses engaged in the commerce of their port. In



OLD BURGESS CLOSE, SHOWING THE *Nisi Dns Frustra* DOORWAY.  
(From a drawing in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries.)

an old building which formerly stood here, probably at one time the booth of one of those Edinburgh merchant burgesses, there was a beautifully moulded doorway with a finely carved lintel containing the heraldic



motto of the city, *Nisi Dominus Frustra*, in the abbreviated form *Nisi Dns Frustra*, and the date, 1573, with what looked like a merchant's mark, but which might have been merely decoration. This is the oldest carved lintel of Leith of which there is any record, and, curiously enough, the oldest carved dated lintel in Edinburgh has a variation of the same heraldic motto. The Edinburgh burgesses compelled the Laird of Restalrig to give them a wider and more convenient access to their harbour, and in this further grant we have the origin of Tolbooth Wynd as a street.

The next superiority the city acquired was that of Newhaven, founded by James IV. in 1504 on lands acquired from the Abbey of Holyrood in exchange for part of his own domain of Linlithgow. Here he erected shipbuilding yards and a naval dockyard for the construction and accommodation of the navy he was so ambitious to possess. The city of Edinburgh, we are told, did not look with favour on this new rival to their own port of Leith. James's naval schemes had already exhausted his treasury, and, as the sale of Newhaven was in no way to interfere with the work of his shipyards there, he readily parted with it in 1510 to the Edinburgh Council, who were only too eager to possess it, for frequent injury was done to the trading privileges of the royal burghs by ports outside their control.

## Chapter IX.

### THE OVERLORDSHIP OF EDINBURGH (*continued*).

IN the last chapter we saw how Edinburgh purchased the Shore of Leith from Sir Robert Logan of Restalrig in 1398 and 1414, and the harbour of Newhaven from James IV. in 1510. These purchases were to prove but the first instalments of Edinburgh's ultimate possession of all save one portion of the town and lands of Leith. The next portion of the superiority to be acquired by the city was Sir Robert Logan's town of South Leith, which he governed by a baron-bailie, who was always his kinsman, the Laird of Coatfield. This acquisition of South Leith did not, of course, include the Abbot of Holyrood's portion of the town, the lands of St. Leonards, which extended from the Vaults to the Brigend. The story of how the Laird of Restalrig's town came into the possession of Edinburgh is rather complicated, as it is mixed up with important State events connected with the troubles of the Reformation and the misfortunes of Mary Queen of Scots.

In 1556 Mary of Guise, the Queen-Regent, met a deputation of four Leithers, who wished to negotiate with her for the erection of the town into a royal burgh, and so raise it to the same status as Edinburgh. This was really more than Mary of Guise could possibly

accomplish, for such a step was certain to be resisted by the city. Edinburgh's opposition would be sure to be backed up by all the other royal burghs, who were keenly jealous of the extension of their privileges to other towns. The first step to be taken by the Queen-Regent in support of the ambitions of the Leithers was to buy up Logan, which she did for £3,000 Scots. The people of Leith paid over this money to the queen, but all they received in return were her letters patent, empowering them to choose bailies and other officers, and to erect their craftsmen into corporations, which in some cases, as in those of the tailors and the shoemakers, had already been done by the Logans.

In 1561 Queen Mary arrived in Leith from France, and took the government of Scotland into her own hands. Encouraged and aided by their young queen, whom they expected to raise their town to the status of a free burgh, the people of Leith in 1564 built a new tolbooth in the Tolbooth Wynd. The old tolbooth of the Logans, in which they had held their baronial courts, had been burnt down by Hertford and never rebuilt. The tolbooth erected in Queen Mary's time was demolished in 1819, and a new one—built on the same site,



THE OLD TOLBOOTH.

53-61 Tolbooth Wynd, in 1822—is now occupied as shops and dwelling-houses. In 1565, in a time of financial need, Queen Mary was granted a loan of 10,000 merks by the city of Edinburgh on the condition that, if the money was not repaid, the superiority of South Leith, which her mother, Mary of Guise, had bought from the Logans with the Leith people's money, should be given in exchange for the debt.

In little more than two years thereafter followed all the tragic events that landed Queen Mary in an English prison, and her loan of 10,000 merks was never repaid. This, we know, was just what the Edinburgh Town Council wished, although they themselves had the utmost difficulty in repaying the merks to the city guilds from whom they had borrowed them. The merk was not a coin, but a money of account, as the guinea now is to-day, and was equal to 13s. 4d. Logan's town of South Leith, as well as the harbour, was now completely under the Town Council of Edinburgh, and later, in 1636, became a burgh of barony under the superiority or overlordship of the city.

The lands of North Leith, including those of St. Leonards on the south side of the water extending from the Brigend to the Black Vaults, fell into the hands of Edinburgh in 1639. They had formed part of the princely possessions of the Abbey of Holyrood. On the confiscation of the Church lands at the Reformation North Leith had become lay property, and, with most of the lands of Broughton, eventually passed into the hands of the first Earl of Roxburgh, who also owned the Canongate. These two properties, the Canongate and North Leith, the earl sold to the governors of George Heriot's Hospital, and from their ownership they passed into the possession of the city.

The Canongate and North Leith were made one barony—the barony of the Canongate—which was ruled by magistrates appointed by Edinburgh. These bailies of the Canongate had no connection with those of South Leith, although they were all appointed by the Town Council of the city. For the next two hundred years, therefore, South Leith and North Leith were entirely separate and independent of each other.

After the disastrous Battle of Dunbar in 1650 Leith was occupied by some regiments of Cromwell's troops under Major-General Lambert. Some English families then came to settle in the town, but they found their industrial activities so hampered by the restrictions of Edinburgh that, along with the people of Leith, they petitioned General Monk, Cromwell's commander in Scotland, to have Leith declared a separate burgh from Edinburgh. But nothing came of it. Monk thought the town was under the greatest slavery that ever he knew, and said so; but on Edinburgh paying £5,000 sterling towards the cost of his great fort, whose memory we still preserve in the name of the Citadel, all her trade privileges were confirmed.

In the wild outburst of loyalty at the Restoration Cromwell's Citadel was dismantled, to the great joy of the people. Charles II. gifted it, with its haven and port, to the Duke of Lauderdale, the king's powerful minister in Scotland. He erected it into a burgh of barony and named it Charlestown in honour of the king. Here was a burgh and its port placed between Edinburgh's ports of Leith and Newhaven, and there was no saying how much harm it might do their trade in such unscrupulous hands as those of Lauderdale. The Citadel had already cost Edinburgh £5,000 under the dread of losing her trade privileges. Now once more she had to



dip deep into her coffers, for it cost her £6,000 more before Lauderdale could be induced to hand it over to her possession.

Besides the district of St. Leonards on the south side of the water, the Abbey of Holyrood also owned the land at the mouth of the river which now extends from the Broad Wynd to Bernard Street. How it came about that the lands of the Abbey and those of the Laird of Restalrig were thus intermingled we cannot now tell. This portion of the Abbey's possessions had been purchased by the Crown, and on it had been erected the King's Wark, a kind of palace and royal arsenal combined, which was the most prominent object on the Shore of Leith, and, like the Signal Tower of later centuries, formed a striking and imposing termination to its line of buildings. Immediately beyond the King's Wark were the Lang or East Sands, now the line of Bernard Street, over which, in stormy weather, the sea swept in long rolling waves, to dash themselves into foam against its northern wall.

Leith was then, and had been from a very early period in its history, the port at which victuals and other commodities destined for the king's use were landed. It was therefore necessary to have Government buildings where such goods could be stored till they were actually required for use. From a very early date houses had been rented in Leith by the king for this purpose. When the English held the port in the days of Edward I. they commandeered the house of John de Lestalric for their stores. De Lestalric was at this time fighting Scotland's battle by the side of Robert the Bruce. This house of De Lestalric's was a great storehouse like the Black Vaults rather than a dwelling. It was used by the English as a kind of distributing depot for army stores

brought by sea from Berwick. To James I. we owe the erection of a special building for housing the royal stores. From its great size and many uses as Government arsenal, naval yard, and even royal palace, this building was named the King's Wark. In the King's Wark and in the royal arsenals at Edinburgh Castle and Holyrood cannon were first cast in Scotland.

The Wark would seem to have been the principal arsenal of the country all through the reigns of the Stuart kings. It appears to have been largely extended in the reign of James II. Its various buildings covered a large area of ground, and from its situation at the mouth of the harbour, and its great tower, it would seem also, like the Martello Tower in 1809, to have been designed as a kind of citadel to ward off the attacks of any enemy approaching from the sea. It was much damaged, though by no means destroyed, when Leith went up in flames during Hertford's destructive invasions. It was repaired and largely rebuilt after Queen Mary's return from France in 1561, and on James VI. succeeding Elizabeth on the throne of England in 1603 he gifted the whole building to Bernard Lindsay, one of his Court favourites. In 1647 Lindsay's sons sold the King's Wark to the Town Council of Edinburgh, to whom its lands still belong.

There remained only one part of Leith over which Edinburgh never had any jurisdiction, because it at no time was any part of her property. This was the district of St. Anthony's, which James VI. erected into a barony and gifted to the Kirk Session of South Leith. This barony included the Lees quarter of the Yardheads which had at one time been the orchards of the canons of St. Anthony. The portion next King Street and Cables Wynd, which the Logans had kept in their own hands,

was purchased with what remained of their barony of Restalrig by Lord Balmerino, who added it to his separate barony of Wester Restalrig or the Craigend, but better known latterly as the Calton, a village on the slope of the Calton Hill overlooking Leith Street, and part of which still survives under the name of High Calton. The dwellers in the Calton were shut off from the city of Edinburgh and from their nearest neighbours in the Canongate by the steep slopes of the Calton Hill, for there was no Waterloo Place with its great Regent Arch in older days. The villagers of the Calton belonged to the parish of South Leith, in whose church their gallery was indicated by a carved panel inscribed with the legend,

“ 16. FOR THE CRAIGEND. 56.”

The site of this gallery on the north side of the nave is marked by a facsimile of this panel, but the original one, erected in the days of Cromwell's stern rule, is now in the Antiquarian Museum in Queen Street, where it was sent when the Church was stripped of so many of its older features during the restoration of 1847. These old villagers buried their dead in the churchyard in the Kirkgate. The distance of the Calton from South Leith, however, induced its inhabitants in 1718 to set up what is known to-day as the Old Calton Burying Ground. This old cemetery was cut in two on the formation of Waterloo Place in 1815. The smaller part enters by the original iron gate from the centre of the village, while the larger part, containing the old collecting box for the poor, enters by a separate gateway from Waterloo Place. The Town Council of Edinburgh purchased the lands of Calton from Lord Balmerino in 1724, and in this purchase was included that portion of

the Yardheads which had belonged to the former lords of the barony of Restalrig, the Logans.

The story of how Edinburgh acquired the superiority of Leith, in order the more effectually to enforce and maintain her trade privileges as a royal burgh, has now been told. The burgesses of that much favoured burgh, through their trade monopoly, had obtained possession of the harbour in the days of Alexander III., if not even much earlier. To this they added part of the Shore in 1414, Newhaven in 1510, Logan's town of South Leith in 1567, North Leith in 1639, the Citadel in 1663, and the Calton barony in 1724. The only part of the town to remain in the hands of the Leithers was the barony of St. Anthony.

Each of these different districts had its own baron bailie, and thus, although they were all immediately adjacent and in some cases even intermingled, they were each under separate jurisdiction. However much such a state of matters may have suited those earlier centuries when overlords were the arbitrary masters of their own lands and their inhabitants, it was altogether unsuited to modern times and the needs of a growing town and increasing population. The conviction of the common interests and needs of these separate but contiguous areas became so strong that in 1833 their antiquated system of government was swept away, and Leith became a separate parliamentary burgh.

## Chapter X.

### ST. ANTHONY'S: A MEDIÆVAL HOSPITAL.

IN the days when James I. became king, Leith had really hardly attained to the dignity of being called a town. The population at this time could not have exceeded, if it even reached, fifteen hundred. But even in those days Leith was ever extending its bounds. At the beginning of the reign the street known from time immemorial as the Shore did not extend farther than the Broad Wynd. On the stretch of rough waste land beyond this, covered with sand and coarse grass, James I. built his King's Wark, which occupied all the ground between Broad Wynd and Bernard Street.

While the King's Wark was extending the Shore seawards, another group of buildings, whose character and purpose were very different, began to rise among the fields and meadows to the south, near where the lands of the Logans met those of the Monypennys of Pilrig. This was the Hospital of St. Anthony, which, unlike the King's Wark, has left its own memorial behind it in the form of some of the oldest and most familiar place-names in the town. All wanderers in and about the Kirkgate know the St. Anthony district with its several old-time alleys—they can hardly be dignified as streets—to which the famous hermit saint has given his name.

The Hospital of St. Anthony was founded in 1430



by the first of the Logans to own the lands of Restalrig — Sir Robert, who had married the Lady Katharine, as their family tree designates her, the daughter and heiress of Sir John de Lestalric who died in 1382. Sir Robert was now grown old in years. His life had no doubt been wild and turbulent, as was the age in which he lived, but it had not been unaffected by the softening influences of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church. He was religious according to his lights, and now in his old age, when no longer able to pursue the old strenuous life, his thoughts turned more and more to his duty to God and his fellow-men. The religious zeal and enthusiasm which had founded and built the great abbeys of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had now spent itself, and yet devotion to Mother Church and her teaching was more widespread among the people of Logan's time than ever before.

In those centuries men believed with the "gudewife" of their own age who taught her daughter that,

"Meikle grace comis of praying  
And brings men aye to good ending,"

and, acting on this belief, men sought to secure their own salvation and that of their relations by endowing the Church according to their means, and conferring such benefits and blessings on those who were in need, that both the Church and succeeding generations of recipients of their benefactions would daily remember them in their prayers. And for these reasons Sir Robert Logan founded the Hospital of St. Anthony, which stood where the Trafalgar Hall and the Kirkgate United Free Church stand in St. Anthony Lane to-day. All that now survives of this ancient religious house are its name (given to the district in which it once stood), its seal (now in the Antiquarian Museum), a fragment of its records

entitled "Rentale Buke of Sanct Anthoni's and Newhavin," written by men who were no great scholars, and a few charters, which, like so many of their kind, add little to our knowledge.

In those charters the institution is sometimes designated the hospital and sometimes the preceptory of "the



ST. ANTHONY LANE.

blessed Confessor Saint Anthony, near Leith"—always *near*, never *in*, Leith, showing that the St. Anthony district was at this date outside the town.

Hardly anything is known of its history beyond what is told us in the "Rentale Buke." Here we read of its foundation by Sir Robert Logan in the reign of James I., and of the names of some of its benefactors, few of

whom are otherwise known to us. No picture or description of the arrangement of its buildings has come down to us, and, to add to our perplexity, this institution has been called indiscriminately a monastery, an abbey, a preceptory, and a hospital. It was neither an abbey nor a monastery, for the Logans had neither the means to build nor to endow such a religious house, but the establishment of smaller religious houses called hospitals now came into fashion as a common work of Christian charity. Such institutions help us to see how widespread was Christian activity in these old Catholic times, and how the poor and needy were cared for in pre-Reformation days. They were sometimes called *Maisons Dieu*, or houses of God. A hospital was indeed a house of God, for therein Christ was received in the person of the needy in obedience to His own words, "I was a stranger and ye took Me in." As Spenser tells us in his *Faerie Queene*,

" Their gates to all were open evermore,  
That by the wearie way were travelling ;  
And one sat wayting ever them before,  
To call in commers-by that needy were and poore."

The Hospital of St. Anthony in Leith served more especially as a home for the aged and infirm, and especially of those who had in any way been its benefactors. In the arrangement of their buildings and in the life lived in them, hospitals closely resembled the larger religious houses such as Holyrood. Like Holyrood, too, St. Anthony's Hospital was possessed by Augustinian canons, but of a particular order known as the Canons Regular of St. Anthony. Their special duty was to wait on the sick, the aged, and the poor. They wore the same black habit as the brethren of Holyrood, but were distinguished from them by a blue cross, shaped like the

letter T, on the left breast, which you may see on the accompanying picture of the seal of the Hospital. Around this seal is the legend, "S Comune Preceptorie Sancti Anthonii Prope Leicht," which means, "The Common Seal of the Preceptory of St. Anthony, near Leith." There also you see the figure of St. Anthony in a hermit's gown under a canopy, with a book in one hand and a staff in the other. At his right foot is a pig with a bell fastened to its neck, and over his head is the T-shaped cross. An old Scots poet, Sir David Lindsay, refers to the gruntil of St. Anthony's sow,

"Quhilk bore his holy bell."

Though every vestige of the Hospital of St. Anthony has long years ago disappeared, and no memory of the



SEAL OF ST. ANTHONY'S HOSPITAL.

benevolent work it once carried on has come down to us, yet no institution of Old Leith, as has already been said, has left so many memorials behind it in the form of place-names. From what we know of mediæval hospitals in England, such as that of St. Cross, near Winchester, where wayfarers may still receive refreshment as they pass, it is not

difficult to picture to ourselves as they once stood the buildings of St. Anthony's Hospital. These consisted of

two parts—the domestic buildings, or hospital proper (containing the refectory, or dining-hall, and the dormitories or sleeping-rooms), and the chapel, for it must never be forgotten that the mediæval hospitals were first and foremost religious institutions, and in the very closest association with the Church. The domestic buildings stood on the west side of St. Anthony's Lane, and stretched towards Henderson Street and the Yardheads. This latter street takes its name from the great gardens and orchards of the canons which extended westwards towards the Water of Leith. Yard and garden are simply different forms of the same word.

These gardens, safe from intrusion like the Hospital itself behind their great enclosing wall, were a veritable haven of rest to the aged and infirm who were privileged to enjoy the hospitality of the canons of St. Anthony, and here, amid the old Scots flowers, the shady trees, and the perfume-laden air, they lived out the evening of their days. No dormitory of the Hospital, we may be sure, would ever be long vacant, but few names of these inmates and pensioners have been recorded. The canons would have outdoor as well as indoor patients, and no garb was more familiar in the streets of Old Leith than the black habit with the blue cross of the canons of St. Anthony as they passed along on their errands of mercy.

But the great centre of the life of the Hospital was its church or chapel. This building, if tradition speaks true, seems to have been unusually large, with either a central or a western tower. It had several altars. The high altar in the chancel was, of course, dedicated to St. Anthony, and there were, besides, altars to the Blessed Virgin, Mary Magdalene, and St. Catherine. Perhaps the last was a loving benefaction of Sir Robert



Logan, the founder, in memory of his wife, Katharine de Lestalric. In the chapel, as the Angelus bell rang out for matins or for vespers, all the inmates would gather for worship. This church, in accordance with use and wont, would be at the east end of the Hospital buildings, and would stand east and west—that is, in the same direction as South Leith Parish Church—so that the east end of the choir would just be adjacent to the line of the Kirkgate between St. Anthony and Giles Streets.

The churchyard lay immediately to the south of the church, in accordance with the invariable custom in pre-Reformation days, when the shadow of the church cast by the sun was never allowed to fall over the graves of those who had found their last resting-place around its walls. This custom has also been observed in South Leith Church, for the part of its surrounding graveyard lying on the cold north side is a post-Reformation addition.

In founding this Church of St. Anthony, Sir Robert Logan for once laid the people of Leith, and especially the old and weak, under a peculiarly deep debt of gratitude, since their nearest place of worship until it was built had been their parish church of Restalrig. St. Anthony's was, no doubt, the church of the canons and inmates of a private institution, but in such religious institutions in mediæval times the general public were allowed to worship in the nave of the church in return for alms bestowed on the hospital. Judging from the many human remains laid bare when digging operations are in progress in St. Anthony Street, the cemetery of the canons of St. Anthony was used by others besides the occupants of the Hospital.

This could only be done by special arrangement with

the parson of Restalrig, the parish priest, part of whose income came from the baptismal, marriage, and burial pennies of the parishioners. These fees they would continue to pay, in addition to their alms to the good canons of St. Anthony's for the privilege of worshipping in their church and burying within their churchyard. In those days of simple faith the privilege of having a church in their midst was prized in a way we are forgetting to understand, or even to appreciate, and at daybreak, at noon, and at the curfew hour, when the Angelus or "Gabriel bell" pealed forth from St. Anthony's tower over the little town, the sailor in the harbour, the peasant in the fields, the workman in his booth, and the housewife as she plied her household duties, all would reverently bow their heads and mutter their *Paternosters* and their *Ave Marias*.

And thus the Hospital and Church of St. Anthony did a great work in the social and religious life of the people of Leith, by whom its canons were held in the highest regard and esteem. Naturally it had numerous benefactors among them, who enriched it with many gifts, and endowed it with the rents of considerable tracts of land. Among the many benefactors of the Hospital, besides the founder, Sir Robert Logan, and Dame Katharine, his wife, were Sir James Logan, his grandson and the first of the Logans of the Sheriff Brae; William Logan, the founder of the Coatfield family, and Patrick, his son; John Lamb, whose family lived in Leith for nearly five hundred years; Maister David Monypenny (the "Maister" shows him to have been a priest) of the Pilrig family. Besides these there were John Lawson, sea captain and pirate, who gave his name to Lawson's Wynd, an old Leith landmark only recently removed; his near neighbour, Agnes Barton,



WATER'S CLOSE, FOR CENTURIES THE HOME OF THE LAMBS.

the wife of his old friend John Barton, the first of the famous Leith sea captains of that name ; and Sir William

Crichton, who gave the Douglasses their "Black Dinner" in Edinburgh Castle, and afterwards gifted lands at Abbeyhill to the good canons to pray "for his soul's weal."

The good canons of St. Anthony kept all these benefactors in grateful remembrance. Their names were written on a long roll which always lay near, or on, the high altar, and it was one of their rules to read "oppynly thair namys als weil the quick as the deid, and that they be prayit for every Sunday till the day of doom"—that is, they prayed for their good estate while living, and for the welfare of their souls after death. People of our time, looking back upon these old pre-Reformation days and their religious customs so different from ours, are prone to say that men then gave richly to the Church with the selfish purpose of having their names remembered and their souls prayed for after death. Now we may be sure that our ancestors of old pre-Reformation Leith were no less sincere in the practice of their religion than we are to-day. It was customary then, in bequeathing gifts to the Church, for the donors to stipulate for the prayers of its members, who would, indeed, have been looked on as wanting in proper religious feeling had they failed to do so. In bestowing their gifts the sincere desire of the donors was for God's mercy on themselves along with "all faithful souls," and such a desire was not an unworthy one.

The Hospital had been in existence for some fifty years when evil times came, both to it and the little town, and the green mounds in its churchyard suddenly and rapidly increased in number. For in 1475 Leith was so sorely stricken with plague, probably brought by some trader from plague-infested Danzig, that all the people during the period of its continuance fled

from the town, and a hospital for the infected was established on Inchkeith. We get a melancholy picture of the desolation wrought in Leith during such a visitation in a letter written by the preceptor or master of St. Anthony's. In this letter the good preceptor says : "Pestilence that immediately proves fatal has cut off the friars of our order, and two alone, myself and another, survive, who have saved our lives by removing to a distance. Our house of St. Anthony lies empty. Our estates in the town are deprived of their tenants, and our lands in the country of farmers, so that our fields are untilled, and we ourselves deprived of the alms of the faithful."

In addition to their ordinary revenue from lands, rents, and gifts, the Hospital of St. Anthony was entitled to a Scots quart of wine out of every tun or cask imported into Leith. This tax or impost added considerably to their annual income. Wine being an article of foreign commerce, the Leith wine trade, wholesale and retail, was the monopoly of the merchant burgesses of Edinburgh. Leithers could, and did, keep taverns for the sale of ale and beer, but they were not allowed to sell wines. The wine-sellers had formed themselves into a fraternity or guild. No one could be a wine merchant in our district who was not at the same time a free burgess of Edinburgh and a member of this guild.

It was through this fraternity or guild that the canons of St. Anthony received their impost or money value of a quart from every tun of wine brought into the town, and it was in all probability from this fact that the wine merchants were led to adopt St. Anthony as their patron saint, and called their guild the "Fraternity of St. Anthony." Like all guilds, they had, and maintained, a chaplain and altar in honour of their patron



saint in the parish church. This Chapel of St. Anthony was in the south transept of St. Giles, and now forms the east portion of the Moray Aisle, for in it the Good Regent Moray was buried.

The ruined Chapel and Hermitage of St. Anthony on the rocky spur of Arthur's Seat, overlooking St. Margaret's Loch and the Firth of Forth, are popularly believed to have been closely connected with the Hospital at Leith, and even to have been built by its canons. Now there is no other foundation for these statements than the similarity of name of the two foundations; for if we have few charters belonging to St. Anthony's Hospital, we have none at all to tell us who founded the chapel on Arthur's Seat. The tower of St. Anthony's Hospital was destroyed in 1560 by the English, and the Hospital itself, like all the institutions of the Catholic Church, was suppressed at the Reformation, which followed a little later in the same year. All its rents and other properties (including the lands, gardens, and windmill) in Leith and Newhaven were eventually bestowed by James VI., by his charter called the Golden Charter, on the Kirk Session of South Leith.

The Hospital buildings were greatly damaged by Hertford's invasions of 1544 and 1547, and by the cannon of the English at the siege of Leith in 1560. After the Reformation they were allowed to fall into ruin, when they became a convenient quarry for the erection of other buildings. One of these was in all likelihood the New Hospital, which was so called to distinguish it from the old Hospital of St. Anthony, opposite the site of whose church in the Kirkgate it was built on ground gifted for that purpose by William Balfour, merchant and bailie of Leith. The rents of the lands and other properties of the canons of St. Anthony had been be-

stowed by King James on the South Leith Kirk Session for the behoof of the poor of the town. They were erected into a barony, and managed by a member of the Session, who was known as the Baron Bailie of St. Anthony. The customary way of aiding the poor then, and for a long time after, was to build a hospital or almshouse in which they might reside. From funds derived from the rents of the old Hospital of St. Anthony this New Hospital was built, and, in memory of the royal gift granted by his Golden Charter, this new and later hospital was usually designated King James's Hospital, as you may read on a memorial stone marking its site built into the wall of South Leith churchyard in the Kirkgate.

The front of this later hospital was adorned with a stone panel carved with the royal arms. That stone is now built into the north face of South Leith Church tower ; but the recess, now empty, in which it formerly stood, still remains beside the inscribed stone marking the site where King James's Hospital formerly stood. For over two hundred years after the canons of St. Anthony had passed away their name and their memory continued, for the Kirk Session called themselves the preceptors of St. Anthony, and in the church records the old name recurs, showing that the New or King James's Hospital was the successor of the old pre-Reformation charity founded by the Logans, and was built and maintained from its funds. King James's Hospital was managed by the Kirk Session and the masters of the four trade incorporations or guilds of the town, which included among their members most of the inhabitants of the Port.

Only members of these incorporations, their widows, and children who were born and had lived in Leith,

were eligible for admission to its benefits. But evil fortune seemed to dog the New Hospital as it had done that of the good canons of St. Anthony. The wine merchants paid the wine impost to the kirk session, as they had done to the canons of St. Anthony, but more and more grudgingly, until they refused to do so at all, and the property of the Hospital was gradually alienated by the session to members of their own body.

The Hospital buildings were removed in 1822, but the Hospital as an institution for aiding the poor still goes on, and small pensions from its funds continue to be paid in Leith. It still owns large tracts of land in the town, covered with valuable buildings, but the feu duties derived from these are so small that they are hardly worth the expense of collecting. Careful and enlightened administration of its funds in bygone centuries would have made King James's Hospital a wealthy institution like the Heriot Trust, and a source of untold benefit to the people of Leith.



ST. ANTHONY'S CHAPEL, ARTHUR'S SEAT.

## Chapter XI.

### THE TRADE GUILDS OF LEITH.

THE craftsmen were the skilled tradesmen or artisans of the Middle Ages. They were divided into guilds or unions, each trade having a guild of its own. In previous chapters we have already read of the Edinburgh Merchant Guild, and a subdivision of it, the Guild of St. Anthony, whose members had the monopoly of the wine trade in the two towns. These merchant and craft guilds were to be found in every country of Western Europe, and the control of all trade and industry down to the close of the eighteenth century was mainly in their hands. No one was allowed to carry on any trade during those long centuries unless he was a member of the local guild of that trade. These guilds, or trade incorporations, as they were more generally called in Scotland after the Reformation, were just the trade unions of mediæval times, with this, among other important differences, that membership was not confined to workmen only, but included all masters and apprentices as well. Hence, unlike the trade unions of our day, their rules were so framed that they protected the interests of the masters and apprentices as well as those of the men, and were as strict in promoting excellence of workmanship as they were in obtaining a good price for the work. In other words, the craft guilds of the Middle Ages, unlike

the trade unions of to-day, not only promoted the interests of the workmen employed, but at the same time protected the general public against the sale of inferior articles.

When these craft guilds were first formed we do not know; but it is in the reign of James III. that they first come into prominence in Leith, and play an important part in the building up of industry and trade. The formation and constitution of these guilds were much influenced by our close social and commercial intercourse with Flanders. Many Flemings, both before and after the marriage of James II. and Mary of Gueldres, migrated to Scotland and became members of the Edinburgh guilds. It was owing to such causes that the Guild of the Masons and Wrights, whose Chapel of St. John is to-day one of the finest in St. Giles', was to have its place in the religious processions on the great Church festival days "lyk as thai haf in the toune of Bruges or siclyk gud tounes." The part the various craft guilds had in these religious processions points to the fact that, like many other institutions of the Middle Ages, they had a very close connection with the Church. Indeed, a religious purpose would seem to have been a main cause and origin of their formation, and just as every church was dedicated to some saint, so each guild had its patron saint with its own altar in the parish church. Over this altar stood an image of the saint, and a curious thing about the patron saints of the various guilds was that, wherever you went throughout Christendom, the patron saint of each particular trade guild, unless for special reasons, was the same.

This religious purpose finds prominent mention in their charter of rights and privileges incorporating the members of a craft or trade into a guild, which in Scot-



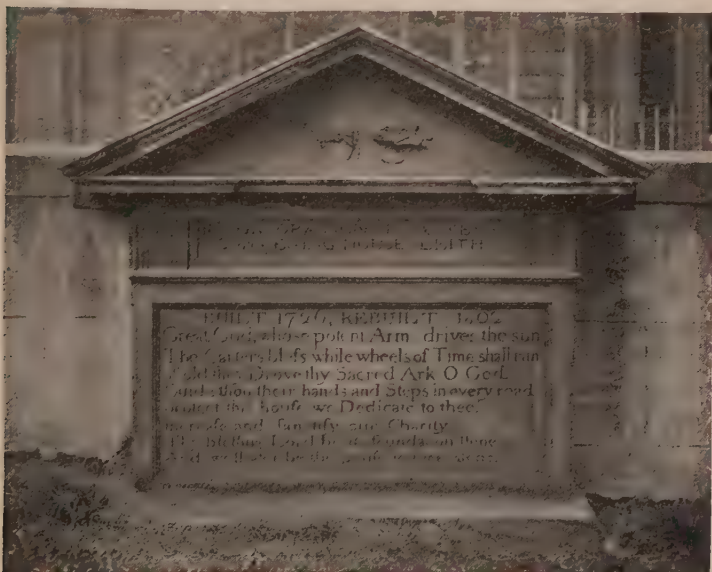
land was always known as a "seal of cause"—itself a continental term. These seals of cause, erecting the various trades into guilds, were so named from the official seal attached to them, and were granted by the overlord of the barony, who fixed his seal to them to show that they were genuine. In Edinburgh, seals of cause were granted by the provost and magistrates with the city seal attached; in North Leith by the Abbot of Holyrood, who affixed the official seal of the Abbey; and in South Leith by the Logans of Restalrig, whose seal contained their coat-of-arms, a heart pierced with three nails in commemoration of the family's share in endeavouring to convey the heart of Bruce to the Holy Land. These seals were of lead or wax, and were attached by a cord or ribbon to the seal of cause or charter incorporating the members of a trade into a guild.

Most of these seals of cause of the old Leith craft guilds no longer exist, and, considering how often the town suffered in the centuries before the Union of the Crowns from the destroying hand of the English invader, this is not surprising. The oldest existing seal of cause seems to be that of the Tailors, granted by Sir Robert Logan in 1515 shortly after succeeding his father, Sir John, who fell at Flodden. The seal of cause of the Cordwainers' or Shoemakers' Guild, granted by this same Sir Robert, was destroyed when Leith was laid in ashes by the ruthless Hertford in 1544. A new seal of cause was granted them by his son, another Sir Robert, in 1550.

In this charter, as in all pre-Reformation seals of cause, the religious side of the guild life occupies the first place. The celebration of masses for the souls of deceased members and the promotion of religious duties and services at the altar of their patron saints, St. Crispin and St. Crispianus, were made a first charge on their

funds, to which each member contributed his weekly penny, a relatively larger sum then than now. In all probability it is from these funds subscribed by their members that the guilds received their name, for the word seems to come from the Saxon word "gild," which means a payment.

The head of each guild in Scotland had an ecclesi-



SCULPTURED STONE OF THE CARTERS' INCORPORATION.

astical title—deacon or kirk-maister usually, but sometimes dean—derived, no doubt, from the fact that he received the weekly offerings and paid all the expenses of its special altar and services in the parish church. The Dean of Guild, the head of the local trade incorporations in Scotland, is always, as in Edinburgh, a member of the Town Council. In Leith this office was generally

held by the provost. The harbour Porters or Pynouris (Pioneers), as they were then called, are mentioned as far back as 1496, and the Carters or Slaiders (sleighers) in 1555. The latter possess several old charters no longer decipherable, in one of which can be made out that they spread a crimson cloth in front of the King's Wark at the landing there of some old-time queen, perhaps the good Queen Margaret of Denmark, or the gentle Madeleine of France, or, it may be, the fairest but most hapless of all, Queen Mary herself.

The Leith Tailors' Guild or Craft, as it was more commonly called in the old Catholic days in Scotland, was unable to afford a special altar of its own, but adopted that of St. Anthony in the hospital church of that name in St. Anthony's Wynd, supporting it by their weekly pennies. The Tailors of North Leith joined their brethren of the Canongate at the altar of St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin and the true patron saint of tailors, in Holyrood Abbey. A little chapel to the same saint once stood just east of the great Abbey church, and is remembered to-day in the names St. Anne's Yards and St. Anne's Brewery.

North Leith, in those long past pre-Reformation days, was merely a village, and not a large one at that. The members of each of its various trades were too few to support an altar of their own, and, like their fellows of the tailor craft, continued to associate themselves with their brethren of the Canongate in the upkeep of the trade altar and patron saint at Holyrood, even after Abbot Ballantyne had founded and built in their midst the Church of St. Ninian. In post-Reformation times ship carpenters were the chief craftsmen in North Leith, for most of our shipyards have always been on the north side of the water, but in pre-Reformation times the

shipbuilding industry had not arisen in North Leith. The only other North Leith craft guild of which we have any knowledge at this time was that of the Hammermen, who, as their seal of cause informs us, combined with the members of the craft in the Canongate in holding their services in the Abbey, at the altar of St. Eloi, St. Eloi everywhere throughout Europe being the patron saint of the Hammermen's craft, which included all workers in metals.

Besides the Tailors' and Cordwainers' Guilds in South Leith, we find those of the Coopers, Baxters or Bakers, Fleshers, Websters or Weavers, and Hammermen, who must all have had their altars and chaplains either severally or jointly in their great Church of St. Mary in the Kirkgate. Several of the old guild chapels, like the Edinburgh Masons' and Wrights' chantry of St. John, are still to be found in St. Giles', but have, of course, never been used since the Reformation by the trade guilds who formerly owned them. Of the chantry chapels in the parish church that once belonged to the crafts in Leith and the religious activities associated with them hardly a tradition now remains, showing that a large part of Leith's history is lost beyond recall; and yet these guilds must have powerfully influenced the religious, social, and industrial life of the town, for within their membership were enrolled the names of all the craftsmen and seamen of the town.

Had the records of those mediæval Leith guilds still existed, as do those of the Edinburgh Incorporation of Hammermen, what an interesting light they would have shed on the story of Leith! There would have been much in those records about the numerous Church festivals—that is, holy days, and therefore holidays—which were held in honour of the patron saints of the various

crafts, and especially about Corpus Christi Day, which generally fell about the beginning of June, and was the great holiday of the year everywhere in Christendom. On that day all the craft guilds of the town went in procession through the streets, the members walking two and two in gala dress, bearing with them banners and other emblems, and forming a spectacle of the greatest splendour, each craft vying with its neighbour in the magnificence of its display.

The clergy of St. Mary's and St. Ninian's would avail themselves of the opportunities afforded by the solemn processions of the day to improve the religious education of the people. This they did by means of miracle plays, so called because they were representations of the life and miracles of some saint, or of events recorded in the Scriptures. The performers were the members of the trade guilds, each guild having its own play, and their theatre was the street. Perhaps the ancient Kirkgate inn, with the quaint and picturesque sign of Noah's Ark over the door, was a reminiscence of the miracle play of that name always performed by the Seamen's Guild on Corpus Christi Day. The annual procession in London on Lord Mayor's Day is the only reminder we now have in our country of these old trade processions and pageants.

Perhaps, however, the most important part of the business of a trade guild was to protect its members and their trade against the competition of outsiders. Fair rivalry in trade in pre-Reformation times, and, indeed, for long after, was a thing unknown in Europe, and woe betide the stranger of those days who came to Leith and tried to make shoes or clothes or act as a smith, without being a member of the craft guild. His goods would be at once confiscated, and he might deem himself lucky if he was simply expelled from the town with-



out being first sent to prison. Nowadays a man may sell what he pleases and work at his trade wherever he may wish, but such freedom was impossible under the old trade guilds. When Edinburgh became feudal superior over Leith in place of the Logans, she declared that Leith, being an unfree town, had no right to have trade guilds at all, and threatened to imprison any deacons of these that the Leithers might elect. The Leithers, however, persisted in retaining their guilds and their deacons, but for this privilege their guilds had to pay heavy dues to the corresponding Edinburgh trade guilds, and thus, just as Leith was the vassal of Edinburgh, so its trade guilds were subordinate to, and in a certain sense subject to, the jurisdiction of those of Edinburgh.

The prohibitory laws of the trade guilds compelled strangers to settle just outside the towns, where they formed new suburbs, in order to be free to carry on their trade. In this way arose in Leith the suburb of Yardheads, on the lands of the canons of St. Anthony. One would have expected that Leith's unhappy experiences at the hands of the Edinburgh merchant and trade guilds would have taught her to see the injustice of these old-world narrow and exclusive trade notions, and to have consideration and sympathy for the stranger craftsman who came to live within her gates; but it was not so. On the contrary, she acted towards strangers exactly in the same narrow and selfish spirit from which she herself suffered so much. Thus in 1676 we find all the Leith trade incorporations sending in a petition to the Kirk Session as superiors of the Yardheads to take some action "anent ye unfree men that live in ye Yardheads by whom they alledge they are injured in their respective trades." When such was the attitude of Leith in matters of trade in spite of the fact that all she suffered as a town

resulted from the same unjust and tyrannical spirit, we can hardly be surprised at similar notions prevailing among the merchant burgesses of Edinburgh.

The Leith guilds had the monopoly of trade within the town, and all who were not members were unfree men in the eyes of the Leithers, just as they themselves were unfree in the eyes of Edinburgh. At an earlier date, in 1630, the Tailors' Guild complained to the Session and Bailies against the uncouth (stranger) tailors in the town, and the Session and Bailies thought the complaint a very just and reasonable one, and determined to prohibit the "uncouth" tailors from plying the needle any longer within the bounds of the town. The Kirk Session of the parish church, from the Reformation down to 1833, seem to have exercised many of the powers now vested in the Town Council, and the two Edinburgh bailies who were deputed by the city to rule Leith were in virtue of their office always members of the Kirk Session.

After the Reformation the trade guilds, under the name of trade incorporations, became more important bodies than before in Leith, and wielded a large influence both in Church and local affairs. Leith, being a vassal town, had no town council, and the only way in which the people could express their wishes, and unite together to have them carried out, was through their trade incorporations, which, in consequence, occupy a very important place in local records. In Edinburgh and other royal burghs the local records are the burgh records, recording the acts of the Town Council, whose place in Leith was largely taken by the Kirk Session of the parish church. It is to the Session records of South Leith Church we must go if we wish to become intimately acquainted with the people of Leith and many of their

doings from the days of James VI. down to 1833, when Leith obtained a town council of her own.

The trade incorporations of Leith during that long period practically represented the whole of the people of the town gathered together in groups according to their occupations. The Leith trade incorporations were divided into four groups—

1. The skippers and mariners of the Trinity House.
2. The maltmen, brewers, and sledders or carters.
3. The craftsmen and meal men.
4. The traffickers, and all other gentlemen and indwellers in Leith not members of any of the other corporations.

The oldest and wealthiest of these incorporations is that of the Masters and Mariners of the Trinity House in the Kirkgate. From time immemorial they had received certain dues called the “prime gilt” on each ton of goods from all vessels unloading at the port. These dues were abolished in 1872, but out of the funds thus obtained they erected a seamen’s hospital or almshouse for the keeping of “poor, old, infirm, and weak mariners.” This hospital, like mariners’ guilds in other ports, they dedicated to the Holy Trinity. The hospital was demolished in 1816, and the present Trinity House erected on the site as a guild hall for the meetings of the Masters of the Incorporation.

The convening-room of the Incorporation is a very handsome and stately apartment, and contains an interesting collection of objects, all more or less associated with those who “go down to the sea in ships.” Among these are Raeburn’s fine portrait of Admiral Duncan, the hero of Camperdown, and next to it that of Captain Brown, the master of the Trinity House who sailed the



admiral's flagship, the *Venerable*, throughout the bold manœuvres of that stirring sea fight. Captain Brown's descendants are well-known citizens of the town to-day. Facing Admiral Duncan's portrait, at the opposite end of the hall, is Scott Lauder's huge picture of Vasco da Gama passing the Cape of Good Hope. Here, too, may be seen an ancient portrait of Mary of Guise and a model



HERALDIC ARMS OF THE MARINERS OF THE TRINITY HOUSE.

of the vessel *La Belle Esperance* in which a more than doubtful tradition would have us believe she came to Scotland, while in the entrance hall stands a huge antique and richly carved piece of furniture, the Incorporation charter chest of former days.

The carved stones which once adorned the front of the old building are now built into the gables of the present Trinity House. The one in the south gable,



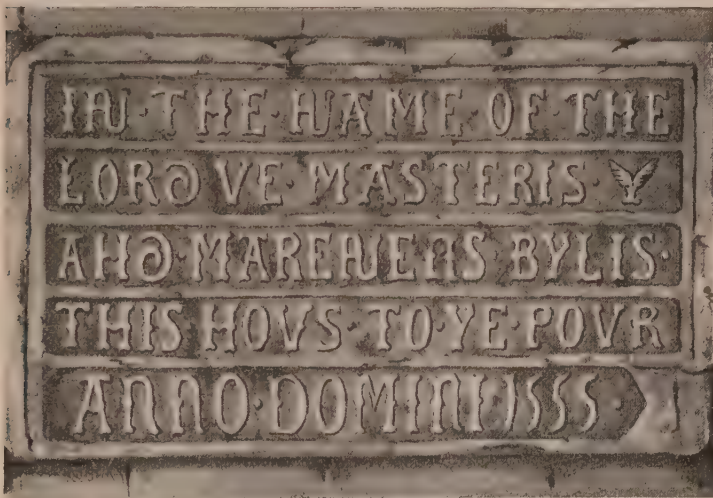
which sets forth the date, and at the same time the purpose of the ancient erection, is in very quaint and picturesque spelling and lettering, all of the olden time, as may be seen from the illustration on page 131. The second stone shows the motto and heraldic emblems of the Mariners' Incorporation, representing the cross-staff and other nautical instruments in use in the sixteenth century when the old hospital was built. Beneath this is a modern tablet bearing this legend—

“INSTITUTED 1380. BUILT 1555. REBUILT 1816.”.

Their prime-gilt dues on all shipping entering the harbour were abolished in 1872, but long before that date the Masters and Mariners of the Trinity House had become a wealthy corporation. They had invested much of their funds in land in Trinity, which takes its name from their Incorporation, and from their annual income they provide pensions for old members and the widows and families of those of their own number. Thus the Masters and Mariners of the Trinity House of to-day carry on the same benevolent work as the ancient guild of the Holy Trinity, and though the exterior of their guild hall to-day has nothing in its appearance to suggest the long history of the Incorporation, we have only to step inside to feel that the institution has a tradition behind it that goes back through many centuries.

As an almshouse for their poor the other three trade incorporations had King James's Hospital, whose site is marked by the inscribed panel in the wall of South Leith Churchyard in the Kirkgate. But besides the Mariners' Hospital of the Trinity House and the New or King James's Hospital (the successor of the old or St. Anthony's Hospital) several of the other trade incorporations had almshouses for the poor and decayed members of their

own trade. One of these, now sorely troubled with old age like the pensioners who once occupied it, still survives in Water Street. Over the central gable is an in-



SCULPTURED STONE, TRINITY HOUSE.

scribed panel which gives all we need know of the history of the building in a nutshell.

1723.

We Coopers In The Town Of Leith Built This House For The Use Of Our Poor.

Renewed 1827.

The buildings of King James's Hospital not only provided accommodation for many of the poor of all the trade incorporations save the Mariners', but were also used by some of them as their guild hall. But, like the Mariners', some of the trade incorporations seemed to

possess convening houses of their own for the transaction of their business. These convening houses have now disappeared, but the sculptured stones which embellished the fronts of three of them still remain. That of the Carters shows a carter in charge of a horse and vehicle, and is now built into the inside wall of South Leith Churchyard. The other two sculptured stones are those of the Carpenters of North Leith in Carpenters' Land, and of the Leith Wine Porters or Stingmen, as they were called because they carried their burdens slung from a sting, stang, or pole, as is shown in one of the illustrations to Chapter XXXII.

It was the trade incorporations that gave the first blow to Edinburgh's supremacy over Leith. In 1731 they determined to test the legality of the dues exacted from them by the incorporated trades of Edinburgh. They brought their grievances before the Court of Session, who in 1734 declared their charters, granted by Logan of Restalrig, good and valid, and their incorporations to be free and independent of those of the city. The distinction between freemen and unfreemen was still maintained, however, in the dues exacted by the Edinburgh Town Council for the importing and weighing of goods at the harbour of Leith, unfreemen, among whom Leithers were included, generally paying twice as much as the free and privileged burgesses of Edinburgh who lived some two miles away. The distinction between freemen and unfreemen, however, in Leith, as elsewhere in Scotland, ended with the Burgh Trading Act of 1846, when the special privileges of the trade incorporations were swept away, and it was made lawful for any person to deal in merchandise, and to carry on or exercise any trade without being a burgess or guild brother, or a member of any guild or incorporation.

In their day of power these guilds or incorporations played a great part in the social, religious, and industrial life of Leith. The tombstones of their members in Restalrig and North and South Leith churchyards, often beautifully adorned with the mottoes and heraldic emblems of their craft, show their pride in having been members of their trade incorporations, whose importance was recognized even down to the early decades of the nineteenth century by the appointment of their Masters to service in the police commission, who looked after law and order in Leith when she was still under the dominion of Edinburgh, and had no town council of her own. And we to-day are reminded of the great part once played by these incorporations by the inscription on the pediment of the Town Hall in Constitution Street, which bears to be "erected by the Magistrates, and Masters of the Trade Incorporations."



A CORDWAINER'S TOMBSTONE, RESTALRIG CHURCHYARD

## Chapter XII.

### LEITH IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

THE cruel and savage murder of James I. at Perth had an important influence on the fortunes of Edinburgh, and, therefore, on those of Leith, for it proved that Perth was no safe place for a royal residence. The queen at once removed to Edinburgh, bringing the little king with her. His boyhood's associations with the city of his birth were to engender in the king a strong affection for it, and to his reign we may date the foundation of the Palace, as distinct from the Abbey, of Holyrood, which was to make Edinburgh the favourite place of royal residence, and the capital of Scotland.

This could not but add greatly to the prosperity and commercial importance of Leith. Yet James II. does not seem to have had such close association with the Port as his father had through his foundation and building of the King's Wark, his fondness for pleasure-cruising on the waters of the Firth, and his interest in shipbuilding and commerce which he did so much to encourage. Perhaps we might have heard more of the interest of James II. in Leith, and his connection with it, had the chronicles of his reign not been so meagre and scanty. Legend, however, sometimes comes to our aid, and we have a very picturesque one describing James's first recorded visit to Leith, although he must



often have been in the town with his parents and sisters on their way across the Firth to Perth.

Sir William Crichton, the Governor of Edinburgh Castle, who, you remember, was one of the benefactors of St. Anthony's Hospital, had the queen-mother and the little king so completely in his power in Edinburgh Castle that they were virtually prisoners. But Crichton was cleverly outwitted by the queen, who pretended she was going on a pilgrimage to pray for her son's health, and earnestly commended him to his tender care during her absence. Starting early in the morning she placed her luggage in one chest and the little king in another, and slung them both from the back of a sumpter horse. Instead of riding to the shrine of Our Lady at Whitekirk, however, she galloped to the King's Wark on the Shore, and embarking, perhaps in the king's barge, perhaps in her own "new little ship," and sailing under a fair breeze, she was well on her way to Stirling Castle before Crichton discovered how the queen had proved too clever for him.

In spite of the strife and disorder that prevailed even in our own neighbourhood between Crichton and the Forresters of Corstorphine, the trade and commerce of Leith steadily increased. In 1438, the very first year of James's reign, we get a glimpse of her growing wool trade with Flanders in the regulations enjoining all traders sailing outward from the port to give a sack freight in support of the Scots chaplain at St. Ninian's Chapel in the Carmelite church at Bruges. Although we have scant record of any association of James himself with our town, yet he did much to encourage its commerce.

Like his father, King James granted a charter to the merchant burgesses of Edinburgh, empowering them

to levy certain tolls and dues on the shipping for the upkeep of the harbour, whose state of disrepair had been the cause of much loss of life. The Leithers, being "unfree," were again treated as strangers in their own town, and had to pay the double dues of foreigners. This, of course, was in strict accordance with the laws and customs of the time, and, while the Leithers might try to evade the higher charges, they did not regard them as unjust, for they were equally ready when occasion arose to prevent strangers from sharing any of the few privileges they themselves possessed.

There was constant coming and going of embassies for the promotion of trade between Leith and Flanders throughout the whole of James II.'s reign. To add lustre to one of these, the king sent with it his own sister Mary, when he, no doubt, came down from Holyrood to the Shore with a company of nobles to see her off. In her honour splendid receptions were held at Bruges, and the trade between Leith and that noted seat of commerce was placed on a more flourishing basis. Another frequent voyager between Leith and Flanders on business of state, mostly connected with trade, was Alexander Napier, upon whom for his many services James bestowed the lands of Merchiston, which, with the old castle of the same name, the family still possess.

Two events of this time were to place the peoples of Scotland and the Netherlands on a very friendly footing all through James's reign. The first of these was the marriage of the king's sister Mary in 1444 with the Lord of Veere, in Holland. There is a tradition that the Princess Mary, as we would expect, encouraged Scots traders to come to Veere. However this may be, Veere some time after became the chief centre of Leith's commercial intercourse with the Continent, and con-

tinued to hold this position right down to the period of the Napoleonic wars.

The second and more important of the two events that drew into closer alliance the people of Scotland with those of the Netherlands was the marriage of James II. himself to Mary, the only daughter and heir-ess of the wealthy Duke of Gueldres. Leith was the natural port of arrival for distinguished foreigners on their way to the Court at Holyrood, and it was to Leith that this beautiful and accomplished princess came in 1449, the first of several foreign princesses who landed at the Shore of Leith to become Scottish queens. Her departure from Holland had been delayed by fear of attacks from English warships, which were ever ready, even in times of peace, to waylay ships sailing to and from Scotland. The fleet arrived safely at Leith, however, where the princess and her brilliant train were met by the Provost of Edinburgh and a great concourse of citizens as she stepped ashore at the King's Wark.

We can picture to ourselves the gay and splendid scene on the Shore on that sunny day in June, when Sir William Crichton, who had been sent to accompany her to Scotland, introduced the princess to the provost and the gay company of lords and ladies who had ridden down from Holyrood to meet her. It is difficult for us in our day, when dress is so simple in form and sober in colour, to realize the pomp and splendour of a royal progress in mediæval times, when costume was so gay, and so extravagant in fashion, and its costly materials showed, as they no longer do in our time, the rank and wealth of their wearers. The arrival of the king's chosen bride aroused the greatest interest and enthusiasm. The people crowded the narrow thoroughfares, that did duty for streets in the Leith of those days, and the galleries

and outside stairs of the quaint, timber-fronted houses, which were gaily decorated with flowers and tapestry.

The princess had a joyous welcome as she rode on horseback, pillionwise, behind the Lord of Veere in accordance with the custom of the time, for side-saddles for ladies were unknown in Scotland until Mary Queen of Scots brought them with her from France. It was with difficulty that the cavalcade made its way by the Rotten Row and the Kirkgate to St. Anthony's Hospital, where Alexander Napier, the king's treasurer, had arranged for refreshment before the princess set out for the city. In the Guest-house of the Blackfriars' Monastery, whose vaulted gateway stood at the Cowgate end of the Blackfriars' Wynd, the princess was warmly welcomed by the youthful king.

James, like his father, was keenly interested in artillery, and during his reign "bombards," as the great guns of those times were called, were frequent articles of cargo between Flanders and Leith, where they were stored in the King's Wark or taken to Edinburgh Castle. Among these was the great cannon from Mons, which, as Mons Meg, is still an object of so much interest and curiosity to all visitors to the Castle. We can easily imagine the excited interest Meg's arrival on the Shore would arouse among all the people of the surrounding district, and we may feel certain that, in her progress towards Edinburgh, she would be accompanied by as large and curious crowds as Leith showed on the arrival of the first "tank."

His interest in gunnery was to cost James his life, for he was killed at the siege of Roxburgh Castle in 1460 by the bursting of one of those bombards in which he used to take such pride. We may look on Trinity College Church and the King's Pillar in St. Giles' as tributes



THE ROTTEN ROW, NOW WATER STREET.

of his sorrowing queen to the memory of her ill fated husband, whose untimely death plunged Scotland once



more into all the disorder and lawlessness that were wont to prevail when the king was a child, and which did so much injury to trade and commerce.

During the minority of James III. the country was undisturbed by foreign invasion, for England was distracted by the Wars of the Roses, and Scotland was thus left in peace. That is why trade and commerce still made some progress in spite of James's weak rule, for he was neither a soldier nor a statesman. As he grew to man's estate strife and lawlessness continued, for he developed all the Stuarts' love for favourites, and thus set the nobles against him. One of his early favourites was Thomas Boyd, a man of great charm of manner, whom the king had created Earl of Arran, and had married to his sister Mary. It was this Arran who sailed from Leith on an embassy to the Court of Denmark to arrange a treaty of marriage between King James and the saintly Princess Margaret of that country.

His embassy was successful in its mission. By the terms of the marriage treaty, which is still preserved in the Register House, the Orkney and Shetland Islands came to Scotland as Margaret's dowry, for her father had no money to spare her. Arran conducted the princess from Denmark to Leith in July 1469, where her landing rivalled in pomp and splendour that of Mary of Gueldres some twenty years before. But in the pageantry of this gala day the brilliant Arran had no share. During his absence his many enemies had poisoned the mind of the king against him, and his life was forfeit. Anxiously and in secret, somewhere near the Shore, his devoted wife, the Princess Mary, awaited his arrival with the Danish fleet in Leith Roads, and, stealing aboard, warned him of the fate awaiting him. He had sail immediately hoisted on one of the

Danish convoy ships, and, accompanied by his wife, at once returned to Copenhagen.

In the Picture Gallery at Holyrood may be seen four fine examples of Flemish painting of this period, which originally formed the altar-piece of the Church



THE BERNARD STREET CORNER OF THE SHORE.

of the Holy Trinity, built by Mary of Gueldres to commemorate her ill-fated husband, James II. Two of these paintings show full-length portraits of James III. and his queen, the Princess Margaret of Denmark, whose reception at the King's Wark amid so many demonstrations of welcome on that far-off July day of 1469

forms one of the many brilliant pageants that have been witnessed by the Bernard Street corner of the Shore—a street that in many ways still has about it much of the spell of ancient days, and seems ever to remind us of our long and close commercial intercourse with the Netherlands in centuries gone by. In walking here we might almost believe ourselves to be on the quayside street of some old Flemish port. And how much more real must the resemblance have seemed in the days before the formation of the now extensive docks, when the Shore was the only harbour and its quays were crowded with great ships, while the sky overhead was chequered with the picturesque outlines of their masts, yards, and cordage.

Arran was not the only great personage of James's reign to whom Leith offered a ready means of escape when his life was forfeit. The king, for reasons we do not fully know, had imprisoned his brother, the Duke of Albany, in Edinburgh Castle. His friends, knowing his life to be in danger, endeavoured to effect his escape. Just at this time a French vessel laden with Gascon wine had opportunely arrived, and was riding at anchor off the pier of Leith. From the French vessel they sent him two runlets of wine, which, luckily, were passed by his guards unexamined and untasted. In one of these was a rope and a waxen roll enclosing a letter intimating that he was to die ere next day's sunset, and urging him to make an immediate endeavour to escape, when a boat from the French vessel would come ashore for him at Leith.

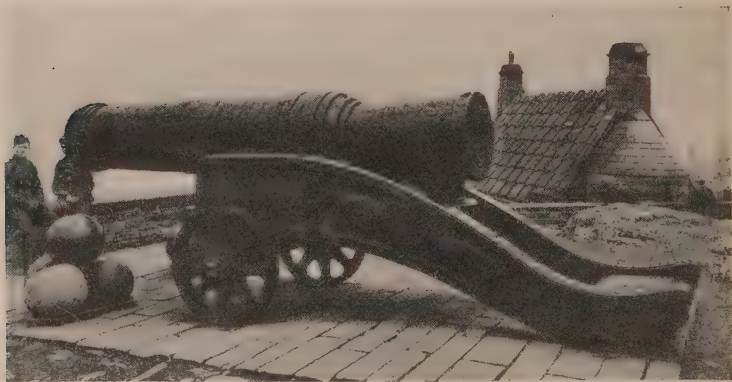
Albany knew he must either do or die. He invited his guards to join him in doing honour to the wine, whose excellence was their undoing, for, when they had become tipsy, they were slain by Albany. He then escaped to

the ramparts overlooking Princes Street. But in the descent by means of the rope his servant fell and broke his leg. Albany was unwilling to leave his faithful servant to the tender mercies of his enemies. Being a man of unusual size and strength, he put him over his shoulders, and, aided by the darkness, carried him safely to Leith, where a boat from the French trader awaited them. Daylight revealed the rope dangling over the Castle rock ; but by this time Albany was well on his way down the Firth to his own Castle of Dunbar, from which he eventually escaped to France.

James III. became more and more at odds with his nobles as the years passed. They accused him, among other misdeeds, of debasing the coinage by mixing brass and lead in the silver money, and making it pass as fine silver. Like other needy kings, both before and after him, this he had undoubtedly done. That is why a pound in Scots money gradually deteriorated in value until it was worth only a twelfth of our British sovereign. This debasing of the coinage greatly hampered Leith shipmen and Edinburgh merchants trading abroad, yet King James III. had no more loyal subjects than the people of these two towns, and, when the nobles imprisoned him in Edinburgh Castle after the belling of the cat at Lauder Bridge in 1482, it was the provost and citizens of Edinburgh who were the chief agents in effecting his freedom. The grateful monarch, believing, as he said, that "we should bestow most on those by whom we are most beloved," in return for this and other services granted to the city the deed known as the "Golden Charter," an incident depicted in one of the picture panels decorating the City Chambers.

The Golden Charter conferred many benefits upon the citizens. We are not concerned with these further than

they affected our town of Leith. This Golden Charter, whose name is an estimate of how highly it was valued by the citizens of Edinburgh, conferred upon them the right to levy many new tolls and dues on the shipping of Leith, with the ownership of the land along the shore for several miles on both sides of the harbour, and all the roads leading thereto. As in the charter granted by James I., the dues chargeable to strangers (foreigners) were to be twice those of freemen. Now the folk of Leith, being "unfree," had to pay the same double dues as foreigners in shipping goods into the harbour of their own town. This was not a decree of the city of Edinburgh. It was a provision of the king's charter, and that provision was there because the law of the land in those days conferred rights and privileges on the freemen of royal burghs like Edinburgh that it denied to the unfreemen of those burghs and to dwellers in towns like Leith, which were considered unfree because they were not numbered among the favoured royal burghs.



MONS MEG, A FLANDERS BOMBARD.



## Chapter XIII.

### OUR PARISH CHURCHES: SOUTH LEITH.

THE earliest centre of religious life in our Leith district was at Restalrig, where a church or chapel of some kind has existed from very remote times. Legend tells us that among those who came to Scotland with St. Rule, the founder of the first Christian church at St. Andrews, was St. Triduana, who had consecrated herself to the service of God. To avoid the attentions of Nectan, King of the Picts, who ruled from 706 to 732, and who greatly admired the beauty of her eyes, the saint plucked them out and sent them to him skewered on a thorn, after which she was allowed to live unmolested, and spent the rest of her days in devotion and service at Restalrig, where she is said to have died and been buried.

Her tomb, and holy well adjacent, became the most noted places of pilgrimage in the Lothians, and many reputed miracles were wrought by the beneficent influence of the Blessed St. Triduana, especially on those deprived of sight or who were afflicted with disease of the eyes. Through the offerings of the faithful a chapel is said to have arisen over her grave, a little church, rude and primitive in construction, after the manner of the ancient chapel now uncovered within the foundations of the great Abbey Church of Holyrood.

We pass from the unstable ground of legend to the sure foundations of history when we come to the De Lestallrics and the Norman church they built at Restalrig before the days of Alexander III. That church would consist of nave and chancel, and be very similar to the Norman church at Duddingston built about the same time (1143). This Norman church of the De Les-



RESTALRIG CHURCH AND WELL OF ST. TRIDUANA.

talrics became the parish church of both Leith and Restalrig, the latter place, strange as it may seem to us to-day, being then the larger township of the two.

James III. and his talented and brilliant son, James IV., were great lovers of architecture. They rebuilt on a much larger scale the Church of Restalrig, which they did their best to enrich and endow. One of these endowments was an annual grant of £28, payable from the

rents of the King's Wark on the Shore. During the same period a chapel was built, or more probably rebuilt, enclosing the well below it under beautiful Gothic stonework, which still remains. The chapel, which formed the upper story, was destroyed at the Reformation, and the well filled up as a monument of idolatry. This well of St. Triduana and that of St. Margaret, which once stood within a few hundred yards of it in the Clockmill Lane, are the two most architecturally beautiful wells in Scotland. St. Margaret's has been removed to the King's Park, though it has left its name behind it to the North British Railway works which displaced it.

The well of St. Triduana has been cleaned out and restored. The chapel that once stood above it, enclosing her shrine, has not as yet been rebuilt, but an effigy in stone of the once far-famed St. Triduana,

“Quhilk on ane thorn has baith her ene,”

surmounts the apex of the well, just as her image in the days of the old faith stood above the altar in her chapel.

A stirring and busy place must Restalrig have been in pre-Reformation times, when so many simple and devout souls, rich as well as poor, came to seek healing for their bodies and salvation for their souls at the well and shrine of St. Triduana, and went away consoled and full of hope that by the powerful intercession of the blessed saint their desires would be fulfilled. To this mediæval parish church at Restalrig, too, went the people of Leith on Sundays, and especially on holy days, which they dearly loved because of the freedom they brought from the dull and monotonous routine of their daily toil. But the inconvenient distance which

separated the Leithers and their parish church at Restalrig, in those days when the church was more closely associated with the everyday life of the people than it is now, made them resolve to have a church nearer home, within Leith itself.

This church, familiar to us all to-day as South Leith Church, was, like the one at Restalrig, dedicated to the



ST. MARY'S (SOUTH LEITH) CHURCH,  
showing Laird of Pilrig's Tomb on extreme right.

Virgin Mary, who thus became the patron saint of the community, and took the chief place in the town arms. That is why in older days it was often called St. Mary's, and oftener still, "Our Lady Kirk" of Leith, as if it had a very warm place in their hearts. And, indeed, it might well have, for it gave them their great annual holiday. A great time of rejoicing in all Catholic coun-

tries to-day, as in days gone by, is the 15th of August, when all make holiday because

“The blessed Virgin Marie’s feast,  
Hath then his place and time,”

for on that day, according to Catholic belief, the Holy Virgin was miraculously taken up into heaven, as depicted in Rubens’s great picture at Antwerp.

But our old Catholic forbears in pre-Reformation Leith had a double cause for rejoicing on that day. The 15th of August was not only the Festival of the Virgin, but also the feast day of their patron saint. Are not the town arms to-day a quaint old-world galley, in which the Virgin sits enthroned under a canopy with the Holy Child? As in Edinburgh on St. Giles’ Day, all the trade guilds in the town, headed by the priests of St. Mary’s, went in procession, bearing the image of the Virgin decked in jewels and costly raiment before them. All the members of the family who worked elsewhere endeavoured to pass the day among their own people, with whom they spent a joyful evening over pancakes and other dainties, telling “geists,” or stories, round the family hearth.

Strange as it may seem, we have no record as to who were the founders of St. Mary’s Church, nor do we know exactly the date of its erection; but neither is difficult to guess. We have seen how the good folk of Leith, shut out from being merchants, became mariners and shipowners, like Sir Andrew Wood and the Bartons, bringing much wealth to the town. Under the peaceful and ordered government of James IV., and the encouragement he gave to Leith sailormen and shipping, the town advanced rapidly in wealth, and was more prosperous during his reign than at any succeeding period



until after the Union of 1707. James IV., like his father, was also a great lover of building, and the growing wealth of the town made their reigns a noted building epoch in our neighbourhood. In James III.'s time the masons and wrights of Edinburgh had become so important that they had been incorporated as a guild by the Town Council, and had had assigned to them the aisle and altar of St. John the Evangelist, now the Montrose Aisle, in St. Giles' Church. Cochrane, the king's Master Mason, a man of outstanding ability as an architect, had been hanged at Lauder Bridge; but he was succeeded in his post by John Milne, the first of a talented family of royal masons, whom we shall see doing much building work in Leith that still survives in our midst.

We have the wealth and prosperity of Leith at this period reflected in the building of the Collegiate Church of Restalrig, the erection of the bridge and chapel of St. Ninian, and now in the founding of the great Church of St. Mary in the Kirkgate, and all within a few years of one another. St. Mary's was erected before 1490, and is therefore in the ornate style of architecture known as Decorated Gothic, which was in fashion in Scotland during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Beautiful traceried windows are the most noticeable characteristic of the Decorated style. The two finest in South Leith Church to-day are the east and west windows, but they are modern. The stonework of their predecessors was removed by the restorers of 1847. That the west window had looked down on many an historic scene, enacted both within and without the old church, mattered nothing to them. It now forms a much-prized decorative feature of a church by the shores of Loch Awe. Nothing could better show with what

heedless and irreverent spirit those who restored South Leith in 1847 went about their work.

South Leith Church has also suffered much in past centuries from the rude hand of war. What survives to-day is only a fragment of a noble cruciform church, once as large, though not so broad, as St. Giles' is to-day. Only the nave of this great church remains to us now. The choir and transepts, with the central tower,



SOUTH LEITH CHURCH,  
showing steeple of R. Mylne, 1674.

were ruined by the guns of the English in 1560. Two of the four great pillars that once supported the tower may be seen from within the church, forming part of the east wall of the nave. Before the restoration in 1847 these were also visible from the outside, as old prints show.

In pre-Reformation times the upkeep and reparation of the church fabric was divided between the clergy and the people, the clergy maintaining the choir where

they alone worshipped, while the people upheld the nave. In the simple ritual of our Presbyterian form of worship the choir was not needed, and was generally allowed to fall into ruin. The choir and transepts of South Leith Church, therefore, after being ruined by the cannon of the English during the siege of 1560, when a cannon-ball passed right through the building from east to west during the celebration of Mass, were never rebuilt. Still, what remains forms a beautiful and stately church.

It has been often remarked that the pillars of the nave are not directly opposite one another. But this feature is not peculiar to St. Mary's, for similar irregularity in the placing of the pillars may be noticed in St. Giles'. This may have arisen from careless measurement, but is more probably due to some difficulty of site. Parts of the foundations of choir and transepts still exist beneath the soil of the churchyard.

The ruins, as at Restalrig, became a convenient and ready quarry from which to obtain building material. Carved and moulded stones, and even portions of sculptured memorial tablets, have been found in demolishing the walls of old houses in and about the neighbourhood of the Kirkgate, for our pre-Reformation forefathers, like the later church restorers, were in no way distinguished for their veneration for things sacred.

The earliest notice we have of St. Mary's Church is in 1490, when Peter Falconer gifted the annual rent of a house in "the Lees," the district in and around Yardheads School and Henderson Gardens, for the maintenance of the chaplain of St. Peter's Altar in the new Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Leith. A few years later, in 1499, Gilbert Edmonston similarly endowed the Altar of St. Barbara. Peter Falconer and

Gilbert Edmonston were two of the best known of Leith's sea captains at this period. Peter Falconer was a man of wealth, as many of Leith's shipmasters at that time were. He had sailed much in northern seas. For that reason, when the uncle of the King of Denmark came to visit the Scottish Court, James IV. lodged him in the house of Peter Falconer in Leith. St. Peter's and St. Barbara's were only two of many altars in this once large and beautiful church.

The high altar in honour of the Virgin Mary stood at the east end of the choir, with a beautiful statue of Our Lady standing above it. In front hung an oil lamp, always alight night and day, in honour of the sacramental bread or host, which, enclosed in its jewelled pyx, was suspended just over the altar. The upkeep of this lamp was in all likelihood provided for by the rent of the Lamp Acre at Seafield. This piece of ground lay adjacent to lands belonging to the Lamb family, who had been dwellers in Leith from the days of Bruce, and may have been gifted by one of them for the welfare of the souls of his parents and of his own.

The church door giving access to the high altar was never closed, so that the faithful might come to worship there at any hour of day or night. Opposite this Gothic doorway, in the churchyard wall, was a wicket, perhaps originally simply a stile, as it was named The Mid-style, leading out to Coatfield and Charlotte Lanes, which, before Lord Balmerino extended his garden to the Links, formed one continuous street with Quality Street, and was known as the Road to the Altar-stane.

The aisles still remain in South Leith Church, but the chantry chapels, with their altars between the pillars, are gone. A chantry chapel was simply a part of a church screened off, before whose altar Masses were sung for

the good estate of the founder who endowed it and other persons named by him, and for the good of their souls after death. Such endowed services were known as chantries, and were intended to continue until "the day of doom."

Now, after reading about those various chantry chapels and their pious donors, we need not lament that the founders of this once great and still beautiful Lady Kirk of Leith are unknown to us. They are well known to all of us, not as individuals, save a few exceptions, but in the mass, for they were the people of Leith themselves, chiefly through their trade guilds, which, like that of the cordwainers or shoemakers, had each its altar and chapel in the church. As we have learned before, the promoting and maintaining of religious services at the altars of their patron saints would seem to have been one of the chief purposes of these old guilds.

Sir John Logan, in accordance with the family tradition of loyalty and devotion to the Church, must have given the site and the churchyard, and his uncle of the Sheriff Brae and his cousins of Coatfield would lend a helping hand. The parson of the Church of Restalrig, without whose sanction no daughter church could have been founded in the parish, gave his blessing and his prayers. Indeed all, rich and poor alike, shared enthusiastically in the work, for it was to bring the benefits of religion to their very doors. The sound of its bell, as it rang out for the various daily services, would be for them, as some one has said, a sweet and holy melody, for it would enable those within reach of its sound to join in spirit in the act of worship being offered in God's house.

As most of the inhabitants of the town belonged to one or other of the various guilds, the members of each,



by means of their guild chapels, came to have their own part of the nave for worship and for burial. These various chapels, with all their rich adornment, were swept away at the Reformation, but we have neither record



INTERIOR OF ST. TRIDUANA'S WELL.

nor tradition of the change. Then, too, it was decreed that the people of Restalrig were to repair to the Church of South Leith, which in 1609, by an Act of the Scots Parliament, became the place of worship for the parish. It was further decreed that the Church of Restalrig as

“a monument of idolatry be utterly casten down,” and soon little more than the choir of this once famous church was left standing. The shrine of St. Triduana was destroyed at the same time, and her holy well, to which devotees thronged in pilgrimage “to mend thare ene,” was filled up. Yet even to this day people sometimes wander to Restalrig, who still have faith in the healing virtues of the Holy Well of St. Triduana.

At the Reformation the Rev. David Lindsay, the friend of Knox, and one of the most noted of the Reformers, became the first Protestant minister of St. Mary's. He was designated parson of Restalrig and minister of South Leith. The chapels and altars of the old craft guilds went from the church with the old Catholic faith. Under the name of trade incorporations, however, these guilds were still closely associated with the work of the church. It was they who paid the stipend of the second minister in the days when the church had two. They were largely responsible for its upkeep and maintenance, for to them and the other parishioners the church had been bequeathed by the Golden Charter of James VI. in 1614, together with the churchyard, the lands of the Hospital of St. Anthony, the Chapel of St. James at Newhaven, and such other properties as the Lamp Acre at Seafield and the Holy Blood Acre at Annfield. But the lands of Parsonsgreen, which once formed the greater part of the glebe of the parson of Restalrig, as the name would lead us to suppose, now became the patrimony of the Logans of Parson's Knowes, as these lands were called in the old pre-Reformation times.

After the disastrous overthrow of the Scots at the Battle of Dunbar Leith was occupied by Cromwell's troops, when the church was forcibly taken from the

parishioners, and, with the churchyard, was turned into a depot for military stores. Pews were just then coming into fashion, and those that had up to this time been placed in the church were used by the Ironsides for firewood. The people of South Leith had now to go to Restalrig for worship, just as their fathers had done before them; and save for a few months in 1655, when they were again allowed to use the church, they held their services around the ruins of the ancient village church at Restalrig until 1657, a period of seven years. At that date the English garrison and their military stores were removed to the newly built Citadel, when South Leith Church was once more opened for worship to the great joy of the parishioners.

From just before the days of Cromwell, as we have already seen, pews began to be placed in the church, and this was done in a way that is highly interesting and instructive. Each trade incorporation had its pews placed just where the guild altar had been situated in olden days, and round which its members had worshipped. Their galleries and pews were adorned with the heraldic emblems of the craft. Some of these have been restored in recent years, and show us how the sittings in the church were apportioned among the various incorporations. The gallery or loft of the Trinity House was at the east end of the church, while that of the maltmen was at the west end and now forms the choir and organ loft. On the floor beneath this gallery some tombs of the maltmen's incorporation have escaped the destroying hand of the so-called church restorer. The north side of the nave was occupied chiefly by the hammermen, shoemakers, and porters, while the south side was given up to the merchants and traffickers.

The trade incorporations still continued to bury their dead where their chantry chapels had stood in the old Catholic days. It is plain, however, that they could not go on doing so in the limited space within the church. So in the middle of the seventeenth century this custom was departed from, save in the case of a few distinguished persons. It now became general for all to be buried in the churchyard, which was divided off in a way that forms an instructive example of how much the customs of past days still influence the present. Each trade guild had, as a burial-place, that part of the churchyard allotted to it adjacent to its sittings within the church, where in ancient days the guild altar had stood and before which its members had been buried.

Beyond the churchyard wall runs one of the main thoroughfares, which had been named Constitution Street from the zealous opposition of the townsfolk to Roman Catholic Emancipation, against which all the churches and trade incorporations of Leith had petitioned again and again. And yet, all the time, the location of their sittings within the church, and of their burial-places in the churchyard without, had been determined by the religious customs of their old Catholic forefathers. Truly we Leithers are a contradictory people.

The parish churches and churchyards of Leith and Restalrig are so full of interest that they would require a book to themselves. Within the limited space of a single chapter one cannot do more than briefly notice a few of the more outstanding features of interest associated with them. The ringing of the church bell each night and morning is another instance of a custom being continued long after it has outlived the purpose for which it was instituted. It shows us that in earlier days

the Church regulated the hours of labour as well as the morals of the people—days when clocks and watches were so expensive that only the rich could purchase them. But in pre-Reformation days this bell was more than a mere factory bell: it was the Angelus, that summoned its hearers to matins and vespers that they might begin and end each day's labour with an act of worship. Let us hope that this bell will long continue to ring, for, though it may have little meaning and purpose now, still it is one more link between our time and the pious days of yore. For long after the Reformation North Leith rang its bell at 10 p.m., while South Leith sent round the town drum at the same hour to warn all people within doors. "Elders' hours" had to be observed in old-time Leith.

The great iron guards erected to protect the graves against the nefarious violations of the Resurrectionists form a striking feature along the north wall of South Leith Churchyard, and are very noticeable in Restalrig. They all date from before 1832, in which year the Anatomy Act, by allowing medical schools to acquire subjects for dissection in a legal way, put an end to the trade of the Resurrectionists.

In both churchyards may be seen excellent specimens of tombstones, especially those of cordwainers and hammermen, adorned with the heraldic emblems of the trade of those whom they commemorate, and showing the pride of the old craftsmen in being members of the incorporation of their craft. A much weather-worn tomb of a hammerman in Restalrig not only shows the heraldic emblems of the craft, "the hammer aneath the croon," but also the trade motto, "By hammer and hand all arts do stand." Near the centre of the churchyard is one showing the cordwainer's emblems, "the cutting knife



aneath the croon," while over the top is the following couplet—

“ The life of man’s a rolling stone,  
Moved to and fro, and quicklie gone.”

Among the noted tombs in Restalrig Churchyard are those of General Rickson, the companion of General Wolfe, the hero of Quebec ; Lord Brougham’s father ; Louis Cauvin ; Lang Sandy Wood, the famous surgeon of Sir Walter Scott’s time ; and that eccentric creature, Henry Prentice, who set up his own tombstone in the Canongate Churchyard, and inscribed upon it part of his epitaph, which his friends, if he had any, never completed. The boys of the Canongate making it a target for stones, as its chipped surface still shows, he had it removed to Restalrig, and was eventually buried beneath it.

St. Mary’s Churchyard is the Greyfriars’ of Leith. Crowded within its narrow limits lie generation after generation of its inhabitants. Round its walls are the stately monuments of her merchant princes. In the portion of the churchyard set apart in days of old for the “ Gentlemen Traffickers ” lies one whose name the genius of Robert Louis Stevenson has made familiar wherever the English language is spoken, the Laird of Pilrig to whom he brings his hero, David Balfour, in the opening chapters of *Catriona*. Opposite, on the walls of the church, is the memorial stone of John Home, the author of *Douglas*. To the east of these is a fine monumental stone to the memory of Robert Gilfillan, who wrote the beautiful song, “ O, why left I my hame ? ”—a song which has touched the hearts of so many Scots exiles, and among them that of the gifted author of *Catriona*.

And last, in the portion of ground at the east end of the church allotted to the mariners, is the handsome tomb of that fine old Leith salt, as was his father before



CAPTAIN DUNCAN.

*(From the "South African" newspaper, London.)*

him, Captain Robert Duncan, who was born in Water Street, and who rose to be Commodore of the Union-Castle Line of Mail Steamers. Always a favourite with

passengers, and, like Tom Bowling, "the darling of his crew,"

"He never from his word departed,  
His heart was kind and soft,  
Faithful below he did his duty,  
And now he's gone aloft."

He was a generous friend to the boys and girls of Leith, many of whom, now grown-ups, must have happy memories of the annual picnic to Aberdour he provided for their pleasure under the charge of Mr. Thomas Fraser, then of Yardheads School.

In 1847-8 South Leith Church had the misfortune to undergo what is called "restoration." That means that it was shorn of all its ancient features, and made to look as new and up-to-date as possible. The old porch was removed, but its position is marked by a label or stone moulding on the north side of the church tower, while a similar moulding on the gable facing the Kirkgate marks the site of the old west door, which, however, was not used. The walls had been covered with memorial tablets to those who lay beneath just as in the days before the Reformation. These were all removed, and the tombstones in the floor, many of them of beautiful workmanship, were used to pave the vestibules and stair landings leading to the galleries, where they may still be seen divided and mutilated to fit them in position. The oldest, bearing the date 1593, is to one of the Logans, probably of Coatfield.

The Kirkgate gateway marks the site of the old entrance porch, which contained several chambers and was called by its old pre-Reformation name of the Cantore or Song School, where the boys were trained to sing in the church choir. Attached to the walls of the Can-

tore were the "jougs" which now hang in the church porch within the tower. As in St. Giles', the outside stonework is new, but much of the interior is old, and has been consecrated by the prayers of the many generations of Leithers who worshipped here ere

"They wan their rest,  
The lownest and the best,  
I' the auld kirkyaird when a' was dune."



THE MARINERS' GROUND, SOUTH LEITH CHURCHYARD.

## Chapter XIV.

### OUR PARISH CHURCHES: NORTH LEITH.

THOUGH more than a century has passed since it was dedicated to God's worship, the parish church of North Leith in Madeira Street is modern compared with its ancient predecessor, which, long since given over to profane uses, still stands amid the quaint houses and narrow alleys that lead down to the riverside in the vicinity of Old Church Street.

When viewed from the south side of the river, from the neighbourhood of the Shore or the Coalhill, the most outstanding feature of North Leith, in spite of the many tall lands that have grown up around it, is still, as in olden days, the steeple of this older parish church, which looks extraordinarily picturesque with its windows of latticed wood, its old clock face, its quaint decoration, and its metal-covered roof, surmounted by an old-fashioned weather-cock. This old weather-cock, whose more ancient predecessor is yet to the fore, still proudly shows where sits the wind; but the clock, by which the North Leithers in days of old used regularly to set their own, has long ceased to mark the passing hours, while the church-going bell which used to ring the curfew every night at ten o'clock no longer swings in the quaint old steeple, but has found a safe resting-place in another





OLD NORTH LEITH, SHOWING ST. NINIAN'S CHURCH AND MANSE, AND INNES'S BOAT-YARD.

part of the parish. For this building, once sacred to God's worship, has for nearly one hundred years been degraded into a warehouse for storing goods. Yet we would rather have the old church reduced to these base uses than see its picturesque old steeple removed altogether from the skyline of North Leith. But of this there is no fear so long as the various flats into which the building has been divided continue to remain as they are constructed at present, for within the ancient steeple is the only stair by which they are reached.

We owe the record of our early history to the Church, but the Church was not simply a recorder of history. It was in many instances the chief maker of it. And this weather-worn church, round which the older North Leith seems to cling, suggests to us that in tracing its history we shall be led to the very beginnings of North Leith; and so we are, for the church, like the town, owes its origin to the Abbey of Holyrood. David's great charter to this much-favoured Abbey in 1143, confirming it in its many possessions, gives us our earliest peep at North Leith as the home of a few fisherfolk, serfs of the Church of St. Cuthbert. Along with that ancient foundation it became a possession of the canons of Holyrood, to whom the Church of St. Cuthbert, with all its pertinents, was gifted by the "sore saint."

Isolated as they were from the greater worlds of South Leith and Edinburgh by the Water of Leith, the inhabitants of the little hamlet in those distant days do not seem to have allowed this obstacle to hinder their attendance at the Abbey Church, then the parish church for the Canongate and North Leith. We have an interesting and even touching picture of this congregation at worship, and of the kindly relations existing between its members and their good friends the canons,

in an old charter now a possession of the Edinburgh University Library.

In this charter we have the sacristan and other leading canons of the monastery coming before the parish altar on the morning of April 2, 1486, and there, in time of high mass, the parishioners being congregated in *magna copia*—that is, in great numbers—explaining how Brother Lathrisk, their parish clerk, who for so many long years had gone out and in among them, because of his age and feebleness had resigned his office into the hands of their venerable father in God, Robert Ballantyne, the abbot; and how the lord abbot had, with the consent of the convent, nominated Patrick Ballantyne to succeed him in his charge, if it was the wish of the parishioners that he should do so. Then, at the request of the parishioners, their old parish clerk was called, who asked them to receive his successor, as he himself, because of his age and infirmity, could no longer fulfil his duties. Then all the parishioners, with unanimous consent, approved of what the lord abbot had done.

Now what was a parish clerk? Well, here he was one of the canons or monks of the Abbey, and it was his duty to precede the priest with bell and lighted taper when the latter carried the sacramental bread to some sick parishioner, and at church services and at the great church festivals to go round the congregation with a sprinkler and holy water stoup and sprinkle the congregation with the blessed water to make them ceremonially pure. Such had been the duties of old Brother Lathrisk among his loved parishioners of North Leith in those far-away days of the reign of James III.

That venerable father in God, the Lord Abbot Ballantyne, into whose hand old Brother Lathrisk resigned his

office of parish clerk, was a great benefactor to North Leith, which then, and for many generations after, was often spoken of as the Rudeside, after the Abbey to which it belonged. Their good abbot, in order to give more ready and convenient access to his little township of the Rudeside, in 1486 replaced the inconvenient ferry and the oft-times dangerous ford by means of a bridge "of three stonern arches," for churchmen were the bridge builders in pre-Reformation days. In those times,



ABBOT BALLANTYNE'S BRIDGE.

when travelling was beset with so many difficulties and dangers, bridge building and road making were looked on as pious and meritorious works before God, like visiting the sick and caring for the poor.

This bridge crossed the river at the Old Bridgend, now gone like many another old landmark, and the roadway that led from it, the Old Church Street of to-day, formed the main street of the little town until 1788, when the drawbridge at the Tolbooth Wynd was

formed, and gave it a new main thoroughfare in Bridge Street. The good Abbot Ballantyne's bridge was then removed, as it interfered with the shipbuilding. Its site was, however, commemorated down to the close of the Great War by the group of houses so long known as the Old Bridgend, behind which, always closed by a rough iron grating, was a narrow passage leading down to the water. This was part of the ancient way that led to the abbot's ferry superseded by the bridge "of three stonern arches" in the fifteenth century.

A few years later, in 1493, Abbot Ballantyne gave further proof of his solicitude for the welfare of his vassals on both sides of the river in Leith. Just as Brother Lathrisk, their old parish clerk, had found the long way to St. Leonard's and the Rudeside beyond his aged strength, so there must have been feeble and delicate folk among the abbot's vassals there for whom service at the Abbey Church meant a long and weary journey. Abbot Ballantyne, therefore, erected at the north end of the bridge the Church of St. Ninian, in later days the parish church of North Leith, and endowed it with the rents of the tenements which afterwards came to be known as the Old Bridgend, and with the tolls of wayfarers crossing the bridge. Here down to the Reformation two priests continued to minister faithfully to the religious needs of the Abbey's vassals in Leith, and every morning at six o'clock, in accordance with the good abbot's injunctions, St. Ninian's bell was to ring out, calling the inhabitants to early Mass, which the two priests were to celebrate in turn on alternate weeks.

It has always been thought that Abbot Ballantyne founded the Chapel of St. Ninian in North Leith because its inhabitants had no other place of worship, but this does not seem to have been the case, for just at this



period there comes into notice for the first time another chapel in North Leith of whose history practically nothing is known beyond the fact that, like St. Anthony's in the Kirkgate, it seems to have been the chapel of a hospital. This chapel and hospital, to which a burial ground was attached, stood at the junction of the Citadel and Johnston Streets. They were very appropriately placed under the invocation of St. Nicholas, for

“ St. Nicolas keeps the Mariners from danger and disease  
That beaten are with boystrous waves and tost in dredful  
seas,”

and North Leith has always been noted for mariners.

And just as St. Anthony's Hospital was founded before St. Mary's Kirk in South Leith, so that of St. Nicholas would seem to have been erected long before St. Ninian's, to which Abbot Ballantyne gave no churchyard, an omission that is unaccountable save on the supposition that North Leith already possessed one at the Chapel of St. Nicholas. And in the churchyard of St. Nicholas the good folk of North Leith continued to bury their dead until 1656, when chapel and churchyard were displaced by Cromwell's citadel.

James IV., who was ever a faithful son of the Church, sometimes worshipped at this chapel. His accounts show these two among several similar entries :—

“ Offerit in St. Nycholase Chapel, in Leith beyond the brig,  
vii s.”

“ To twa puir laddies beside Sanct Nicholas Chapell of Leith,  
xi d.”

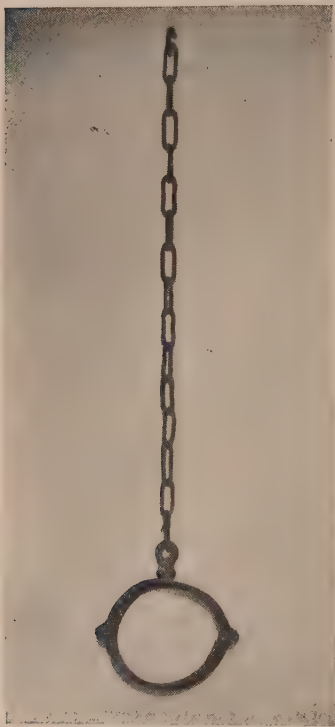
As St. Nicholas was the patron saint of seamen, this hospital, like that of the old Trinity Hospital in the Kirkgate, may have been, in the first place, for aged and decayed mariners. It must have been a prominent object

to those approaching Leith from the sea, and mariners, returning from a long and prosperous voyage, would not forget the good St. Nicholas who had safely brought them where they longed to be. Neither St. Ninian's nor St. Nicholas's would escape injury during Hertford's devastating invasions, and at the Reformation the Chapel of St. Nicholas was allowed to fall into ruin, and all records connected with it were lost.

Among the last authentic notices of St. Nicholas's Chapel is one in connection with the death of Mr. Muirhead, the first minister of North Leith after the Reformation, who in 1612, we are told, died in his upper chamber of the old manse of St. Ninian, which still stands beside the church, "and was buried in St. Nicholas's Chapel on Friday thairafter at the west gavel." But workmen in digging trenches for drains and other works in and about the foot of Dock Street, a thoroughfare that has displaced the ancient St. Nicholas's Wynd, often uncover the bones of those who found their last resting-place in the old churchyard of St. Nicholas so many centuries ago, and wonder how they came to be there.

At the Reformation the possessions of the canons of Holyrood in Leith were bestowed by James VI. on John Bothwell, who stood high in royal favour, and his indulgent master at the same time created him Lord Holyroodhouse. The Chapels of St. Ninian and St. Nicholas then fell into decay. Some time later the Chapel of St. Ninian, along with the chaplain's house, the tithes of Hillhousefield, and of fish brought into Leith and Newhaven, were sold to the inhabitants of North Leith, which included St. Leonard's, the abbot's lands between the Bridgend and the "Blak Volts" of the Logans of Coatfield. The church and chaplain's house having become ruinous, were, in 1595, either repaired or rebuilt,

for it is recorded "thair has been ane kirk re-edified on the north side of the brig of Leith." This re-edified kirk and chaplain's house became in 1606 the parish church and manse of North Leith, Pilrig, Bonnington, Newhaven, and Warriston ("the bonnie Warriston" of the old tragic ballad).



THE JOUGS,  
SOUTH LEITH CHURCH.

The earliest date to be found on the present one-time parish church of North Leith is the year 1600 on a great inscribed lintel that stood over the main entrance to the church. The manse was afterwards extended across the front of the church, and access given to the doorway by a pend beneath the addition to the manse. Above this pend was placed the lintel of the now hidden doorway, and manse, pend, lintel, and church may all be seen to-day by peeping within the gate of the oil and paint stores of which they now form part. The walls of this older church

are easily distinguished by their greater thickness from those of later additions and alterations.

Like the churches of South Leith, Restalrig, and Duddingston, that of St. Ninian had attached to some

part of its fabric the joughs in which offenders against the law, both of church and town, had to undergo punishment. Thus on June 1605 one Peter Waugh, who had caused much trouble to the authorities, was on his next offence to stand in the joughs "frae morne to even."

In Chapter XI., dealing with the trade guilds of Leith, which included in their membership most of the townsmen in mediæval times, and which played at least as great a part in promoting religious services as in developing trade and industry in the town, we found that the guilds of North Leith joined those of the Canongate in the support and upkeep of the guild altar and chapel in the Abbey Church rather than uphold altars for themselves in their own Church of St. Ninian. They began this when Holyrood was the only place of worship for the abbot's vassals, and had continued it as their own members were few and their funds small. After the Reformation, however, when altars and chantries had all been swept away, the trade incorporations, as we must now call them, benorth the brig, like those on the south side of the water, had as large a share in the work of the church as in the days preceding the Reformation. This is sufficiently indicated in the fact that the communion cups still used in the present parish church of St. Ninian in Madeira Street were gifted to its ancient predecessor by the "Masters and Maireners," the shipbuilders and carpenters of North Leith in 1673, while the baptismal font was presented by the trades of North Leith at the same date.

The Ship Carpenters' Incorporation held an important place among the trade guilds of North Leith, which has always been the shipbuilding quarter of the town. Before the days of steamships the carpenters' yards, as the

shipyards were then called, lay along the north bank of the river and were reached by narrow winding closes which ran down to the waterside from Old Church Street and Sandport Street. One of these carpenters' yards of bygone days, so long known as Innes's, is seen in the picture of Old North Leith at the beginning of this chapter.

How Edinburgh became possessed of North Leith we have already seen, and how the chapel and burial

ground of St. Nicholas were removed by General Monk in 1656, to make way for Cromwell's citadel, we shall hear in due sequence. By Monk's act of vandalism the North Leithers were left without a place of burial for eight years. During that period they were beholden to their good neighbours of South Leith for leave to bury in their churchyard. As it had been by Edinburgh's aid that the Citadel was erected at all, it was to the provost and magistrates of the city that the



SHIP CARPENTERS' CONVENING  
HOUSE, SANDPORT STREET,  
NOW REMOVED.

North Leithers turned for a new place of burial, and after repeated importuning they were given, in what is now Coburg Street, "a garden extending to the river bank," which remained the only place of burial of the little town until the opening of Warriston and Rosebank Cemeteries in 1843 and 1846 respectively. Unfortunately the church



records of North Leith for these very years are wanting, if they ever were written, for during some of those years the North Leithers, like their neighbours in the larger world of South Leith, having strong hankerings after "the king over the water," were denied the use of their church for fear of their minister taking the opportunity to foster and encourage their royalist tendencies from the pulpit. The church meanwhile was used as a storehouse for munitions of war.

Monk is said to have allowed the good folk of North Leith to remove their tombstones and even their dead from the churchyard of St. Nicholas to the new burying ground by the river bank. When we remember that eight years were to elapse between the loss of the old and the grant of the new cemetery, we see at once that this story is mere legend, with no basis of fact beneath it, and certainly there are no tombstones from the older churchyard of St. Nicholas in the burial ground in Coburg Street to-day.

Many generations of North Leithers

" Who have worked their work, now reap  
The unfathomable sleep "

of the dead within the old burial ground, as it has now long since become. Beyond that little can be said of those who lie there, for of few of them is there now any memory even in Leith itself, and yet some, judging by the coats-of-arms on their tombs, had been people of note in the social world of their own time. Perhaps the one best known to general fame is Robert Nicoll, the "Keats" of Scottish poets, whose high poetic promise was cut short by untimely death when he was scarce out of his teens.

Just forenent the gate of the churchyard is the great

altar-like tomb of Thomas Gladstone, the grandfather of the famous statesman. Perhaps it was constructed in this fashion as a protection against the "body snatching" of the Resurrectionists, for down to the first quarter of the nineteenth century this old graveyard was a lonesome spot, and on dark nights these foul robbers would steal up the harbour, fasten their boat to a branch of one of the overhanging trees of the burial ground seen



THE GLADSTONE TOMB, NORTH LEITH.

in the picture of the old bridge, and then go about their ghoulish work.

Thomas Gladstone was a corn merchant on the Coalhill, but his house was at the head of King Street, where the site is indicated to-day by an inscribed tablet. The Coalhill, then one of the chief business streets of the town, formed part of the "Hill" district, as the abbot's lands of St. Leonard's were now called, and a portion of the parish of North Leith, although on the south side of the water. The Coalhill was so named in the eighteenth century because it was here that vessels bringing coals for public sale were berthed. They were

charged no shore dues, and all other vessels had to give place to them.

The Gladstones "sat" in North Leith Church for over forty years, where old Thomas Gladstone was elder for the "Hill" district. This would almost seem to indicate that the family had resided here before they became established in the King Street house, and, if so, then Sir John, the father of the famous prime minister, would be born in the Coalhill, and not in King Street. The Gladstone mansion in King Street was burned down just over twenty-five years ago. James Gledstane, as they then spelt their name, the brother of Thomas, was parish schoolmaster of North Leith from 1769 to 1799. The old schoolhouse may yet be seen within a pend in Bridge Street. It is now a painter's store.

The minister of St. Ninian's in old Thomas Gladstone's day was Dr. Johnston, who was always lovingly and familiarly spoken of, especially by the fisherfolk of Newhaven, then among his parishioners, as the "bonnie Dr. Johnston," from his handsome appearance and refined and courteous manner. He was minister of North Leith for the long period of fifty-nine years, from 1765 until 1824. Between the Gladstone and Johnston families there was a lifelong friendship, and the famous statesman used to tell how as a little boy he met Dr. Johnston in Glasgow. The good doctor, then eighty-two years of age, had walked all the way from Leith, and intended walking all the way back again.

That same year he preached his last sermon in old St. Ninian's to a crowded congregation. The old church had become too small for them, and being crowded to the roof with gallery upon gallery was stuffy and unhealthy from want of proper ventilation. The congregation were about to move to a new church (the present

building in Madeira Street), which, like St. Anthony's, had been built in the fields beyond the town, and like it, too, was ere long to find itself in the heart, instead of the outskirts, of the town.

For eight years Dr. Johnston was to continue their pastor in the new building, and then, in 1824, at the age of ninety-two, he passed to his rest, and was laid among



THE OLD BLACK SWAN AND HART'S LAND.

his own people in the old burial ground of St. Ninian's, where a plain recumbent slab marks his grave; and in the same year the old church, which had become the nursery of two other congregations—Coburg Street and Junction Road United Free Churches—passed from sacred to secular uses. Two old buildings stood for long years beneath the shadow of St. Ninian's Church—the old Black Swan, the village inn, and Hart's Land, a weather-worn tenement with a dovecot gable. Hart's Land has in recent years lost much of its quaintness, and all trace

of the old Black Swan has now disappeared, for it was rebuilt in 1892.

The Black Swan of our day is merely an up-to-date public-house. It lacks all the quaint picturesqueness of its ancient predecessor that used to speak to us so eloquently of its old-world past. The Black Swan of days of yore was the great trysting-place of North Leith. Close by stood the village well where gossiping dames and pretty serving-maids would forgather to fill the household stoups, and exchange pleasantries with the jolly sailor lad who came with water-barrel for the supply that was to serve the ship's crew on the outward voyage. How many a yarn of fights at sea with the French privateers of the old war days, and of the perils of the Greenland whale-fishing, must have been spun within and around the old Black Swan!



ST. NINIAN'S CHURCHYARD, COBURG STREET.



## Chapter XV.

### LEITH SHIPPING IN EARLY STUART TIMES.

IN Chapter III. was given some account of Leith's commerce and the countries with which she traded down to the end of Scotland's golden age, which closed with the tragic death of Alexander III. in 1286. In the troubled years of Scotland's strenuous fight to maintain her national independence against England during the reigns of the first three Edwards, the English, who during that period were in alliance with Flanders against France, did their best to persuade their Flemish allies to have no commercial dealings with the Scots. They did not succeed at this time, however, for the Flemings declared that Flanders was a free country, and open to all nations for the purposes of trade.

Yet Flanders, as the great cloth factory of Europe, could not afford to be on bad terms with England. It was from that country she obtained her chief supply of wool, for England was the only country in Europe at that time peaceful enough for the secure feeding of sheep. Bruges up to this time had been the chief centre, or staple as it was called, of Scotland's trade with Flanders and the continental port with which Leith had most commercial intercourse. The "intolerable disrespect" shown to Leith and other Scots traders at Bruges owing to the friendly alliance between Flanders

and England led to the staple being removed to Middelburg, in Holland, a country not as yet under the control of the dukes of Burgundy, the rulers of Flanders at this time.

The trade of Leith not only suffered from the hostility of England and her allies during times of international strife on the Continent, but was greatly injured, as we have already seen, by the insecurity and lawlessness that arose from strife at home, whether with the "auld enemy" or from the endless feuds of the nobles. Yet, in spite of being thus hampered and obstructed, the trade of the Port steadily grew. In the last year of Bruce's reign the customs duties paid on Leith's export trade amounted to only £439, while forty years later, in 1369, they had risen to twice that sum. By 1424, when James I. returned to Scotland after his long imprisonment in England, the customs revenue from the Port of Leith had again more than doubled itself, showing that, even in those lawless years of James's enforced absence in England, Leith's shipping trade was steadily growing. When we consider the insecurity of those times, and the many obstacles and risks by which overseas commerce was beset and injured, our wonder is that it grew at all.

The unprovoked attacks by the Flemings, of course, led to reprisals, and in the lawless game of piracy Leith sailormen of those turbulent times could stand their own. These reprisals soon led the Duke of Burgundy to see that the benefits of occasional captures of Scottish ships were as nothing compared with the advantages of settled trade. The result was a commercial treaty between Scotland and the Netherlands in 1425, for by this date the dukes of Burgundy had added Holland to their other dominions. This treaty attempted to secure to those

from Edinburgh and Leith trading with Flemish and Dutch ports, in addition to other privileges, a valuable right for which they had long clamoured, and without which no commerce could flourish.

By the charter now given, a copy of which is to be found both in the Register House, Edinburgh, and at Bruges, it was mutually agreed that Scots merchants and traders would no longer be arrested nor their goods confiscated, as had been so frequently done in the past, for the debts or the misdeeds of other Scots merchants, who did not always pay their just and lawful debts incurred abroad. There still exists a black list of overseas debts left unpaid, whatever may have been the reason, on which a number of well-known Edinburgh merchants, and even the king, James II., stand high.

The Baltic seaports, and especially the great Hanseatic port of Lübeck, looked with no friendly eye on ships from the west trading in Baltic waters, and resorted to open acts of violence to injure their trade. The Stuart kings made bitter complaints to the emperor of the attacks and cruelties Scots merchants and seamen had to suffer at the hands of the bold Lübeckers. It might be that these old Edinburgh merchants trading through their port of Leith had sustained losses through unjustified attacks on their ships by those of the Hansards, and took the method of not paying their just debts in order to recoup themselves for the losses they had sustained through unprovoked attacks on their ships by those of the Hanseatic League.

If the Hansards complained of our local traders for the non-payment of their debts, still more did they resent the treatment they received from them at sea. Leith sailormen were in no way behind the bold Lübeckers in attacking and seizing the ships and cargoes of others

on the high seas when a favourable opportunity arose. Indeed, such acts of piracy were as congenial an occupation to Leith sailormen as a raid into England was to the Scottish Borderers, and were ordinary and everyday incidents of navigation in those unruly times.

While there were no means to compel kings like James II. to pay their debts to foreign traders if they refused to do so, it was otherwise with ordinary merchants. As the Hansards once more threatened to arrest the goods of all Scots merchants in Prussian ports in order to repay themselves for the loss our traders had caused them, it was plain that the penalty of any Edinburgh merchant's dishonesty was liable to fall on all merchants from our district. For that reason the Edinburgh Merchant Guild would take the matter in hand, and we may feel sure that this powerful body would not be slow to deal severely with any of their members whose business action was likely to lead both to the confiscation of their goods and to the interruption of trade for an indefinite period. They would see to it either that the debts were paid or that the defaulting member was expelled from the guild. Such a punishment would mean the end of his career as a trader, for no one in our district outside the Edinburgh Merchant Guild could under any circumstances whatever engage in foreign commerce.

The Edinburgh Merchant Guild might have a check on the doings of their own members, but they had little, if any, on the skippers and mariners of Leith, who, remembering that their town was "unfree," had little regard for anything the Edinburgh merchant burgesses might do or say in the matter. The Leith skippers gained rather than lost by such enterprises, and their disturbing effect on a trade they were not allowed to share mattered nothing to them.

The Strait of Dover and the English Channel were known to the sailormen of Western Europe at this time as the Narrow Seas, and were always so named. They were a great highway of traffic not only for England but also for the ships of Genoa, Venice, and Spain, sailing to and from Bruges, Lübeck, and other ports of the Hansards. Hostile English ships were always to be met there, and they were the haunts of the pirates of all nations, among whom were, of course, some from Leith. But however rich a cruising ground they might prove for Leith pirates, the Narrow Seas were no safe place for Leith vessels to venture in the pursuit of trade. The voyage to France by this route, therefore, involved too many risks for traders from Leith to follow generally. That was why it was necessary for Scots traders to have a port such as Bruges in a country like Flanders, more accessible than France then was, to be a general depot or staple for their foreign trade.

We have seen that this trade was so much interrupted by the wars between England, the Empire, and France, that the staple was removed to Middelburg in Holland. The staple town according to law, though not always according to practice, was supposed to have the monopoly of Scotland's trade with the Low Countries. In 1541 the Scottish staple was removed to the neighbouring town of Veere, and there it remained until Holland joined Napoleon at the close of the eighteenth century. Holland at this time, however, was less advanced industrially than Flanders; but as Middelburg was equally convenient for the markets of Bruges, now declining, and those of Antwerp, now rising, as the great centres of European trade, Leith's commerce in no way suffered, but rather gained, by the change. As time went on the Dutch granted Scotland the great privilege of



having a Scots merchant resident at Middelburg, whose duty it was to protect and promote the interests of Scots traders frequenting the port, where they were given the further privilege of having a quay and warehouses for their own use.

Such an officer to-day would be called a consul. Then he had the imposing title of "Lord Conservator of the Scottish privileges in the Low Countries." The most noted of these conservators was Andrew Halyburton, who occupied the office from 1493 to 1503. Halyburton further acted as agent, and bought and sold goods for Scots merchants on commission. His ledger, in which he kept the accounts of his clients, is now in the Register House, and, as his trading correspondents were mostly Edinburgh merchants and leading Churchmen like our old friend the good Abbot Ballantyne, this time-worn ledger gives us an interesting and detailed summary of Leith's trade with the Netherlands at the close of the fifteenth century.

Indeed, of no period of Leith's overseas commerce, until that of our own day, do we know so much. In Chapter III. we saw this commerce being carried on for the most part in Flemish ships. But in Halyburton's time the cargoes set down in his ledger are imported in Leith ships, commanded and manned by Leith skippers and mariners. While the nobles were impoverishing themselves and their lands by their eternal feuds and strife, there was arising in Leith a prosperous middle class of wealthy shipowners, not merchants, because Leith was an unfree town, but bold and daring navigators, whose skill and enterprise not only enriched themselves, but brought wealth and prosperity to the Port. We have seen the middle class, in this case a merchant class, slowly but surely rising in Edinburgh from the days of

Robert the Bruce, in men like William Fairley and Walter Curry, and now, in the reigns of James III. and James IV., in Sir Alexander Lauder and Touris of Inverleith. To these two classes, the merchants of Edinburgh and the skippers and shipowners of Leith, the early progress and prosperity of the two towns are mostly due.

We see this trading class in Leith, in men like Gilbert Edmonston and Peter Falconer, not only acquiring wealth, but also spending it to the great benefit and adornment of the good town. The growing prosperity of the trading classes tempted the younger sons of noblemen and gentlemen to enter their ranks, and thus in Leith we find members of the great and powerful Logan family becoming master mariners and joining the Bartons in their persistent spoliation of the Portuguese. And just as in Bruce's time we had Edinburgh merchants associated with noted events in their country's history, in which their swords were more fitting instruments than their pens, so here in Halyburton's ledger are names around which time and story have cast the magic spell of romance, the names of some of those stout and gallant burghers

“ Who on Flodden's trampled sod,  
For their king and for their country,  
Rendered up their souls to God.”

Had Andrew Halyburton foreseen, as he looked out on the ship canal at Middelburg and penned his accounts, that of all the Scots ledgers of those long-past centuries his alone was destined to survive for our perusal, he might have done more to satisfy our curiosity. As it is, he often puts us Leithers out of all patience, for he persistently mentions Leith ships without naming their skippers, and as often speaks of skippers without naming their

ships, as when he sends home to "My Lord of Holyruidhous"—that is, Abbot Ballantyne—four puncheons of wine of Orleans in the *Julyan*, and on another occasion sends the good abbot two puncheons of claret by Gilbert Edmeston. This shipman, the owner and skipper of the *Julyan*, was none other than Gilbert Edmonston, the founder of the chantry of St. Barbara in St. Mary's Kirk at this very time, perhaps out of gratitude for being brought to his desired haven after a more than usually perilous voyage. For storms raged then as now, as in the great gale of Mary's time, when the windows of St. Giles' were blown in, and the pier and bulwark of Leith washed away. And on such wild and stormy nights in those times no friendly gleam flashed from the May and Inchkeith to guide mariners on their course up the Firth. For this reason it was that in all seafaring countries sailormen and their ships remained in harbour during the winter months. It was the centurion's disregard of this rule that led to St. Paul's shipwreck on the voyage to Rome.

But although this custom had been made a law of the land by the Scots Parliament it was not observed during the reign of James IV., for in Andrew Halyburton's ledger we find Leith mariners fearlessly voyaging to and fro across the stormy waters of the North Sea all through the winter months, as Gilbert Edmonston did through the ten years of this old conservator's accounts. And it may be, as time and again he steered for the harbour mouth on his return voyage, the man on the lookout, in sounding his trumpet warning of their approach to outcoming vessels, as ships now sound their siren, would add a note only used aboard the good ship *Julyan* as a signal to their womenfolk that they had reached port once more in safety. Gilbert Edmonston was dead before 1510, but whether he found his

last anchorage beneath the heaving waters of the North Sea or under the shadow of the altar of St. Barbara in the Lady Kirk we cannot now tell. All we do know is that the families of the Edmonstons and the Bartons were bound by the closest ties of friendship, and that when Gilbert Edmonston passed away his widow, Elizabeth Crauford, became the wife of that noted Leith navigator, Robert Barton of Barnton.

The great highway of Scotland's commerce all through those long centuries was the North Sea. On its shores were, therefore, her chief ports, Leith, Aberdeen, and Dundee. Of these Leith was, as she still is, by far the most important, and indeed was the chief port of the country until surpassed by Glasgow in the early nineteenth century. The days of Leith's greatest fame were those of the reign of James IV. It was Robert the Bruce who first foresaw the importance of a navy to a small country like Scotland with her large seaboard; but James IV. was the first of his successors who had the wisdom and enterprise to build it. In doing so, James was only following the example of the other rulers of Western Europe, who were all showing the greatest interest in matters pertaining to the sea. Columbus had just discovered America, and Vasco da Gama the sea route to India, and, if Scotland was to have any place at all among the nations of Europe, she must become a power at sea. This James determined to make her, and, in carrying out this policy, he was so wisely and ably supported by the skippers and mariners of Leith that our town became noted both at home and abroad for the number and size of its ships, and still more for the skill and daring of its mariners, who successfully fought their way at sea against all who sought to oppose them.

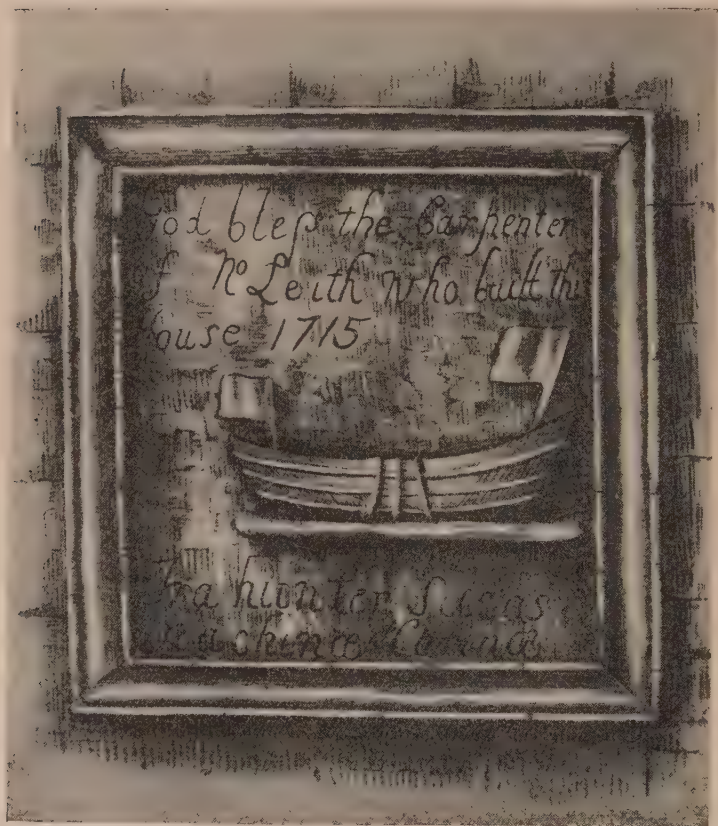
At this time Scotland had no ships of war properly so called. The king's ships, which had already won renown by their victories at sea, were only used for purposes of war as necessity arose. They were merely armed merchantmen, and in times of peace were engaged in the work of trade and commerce. For the king, like some of the great Churchmen and some nobles like Lord Seton, had ships of his own, which he, too, let out for trading ventures at so much per voyage. This had been for long a custom of English monarchs also, and Henry VII., James's contemporary on the throne of England, constantly hired out the royal ships to merchants, who were thus saved the expense of their upkeep and maintenance. The larger the ships the more popular they were, as they not only held more cargo, but were less likely to fall a prey to the pirates who were rampant on all the overseas trading routes.

Besides the *Flower* and the *Yellow Carvel*, which had won so much renown under their famous captain, Sir Andrew Wood, there were several other ships belonging to the king, which were mostly engaged in trade between Leith and the Netherlands, and especially to Middelburg, at this time the staple town for Scots trade and one of the chief commercial ports of Holland. One of the great advantages in those times of a staple town to which the trade of the country was largely restricted was that the ships could sail in convoys and thus minimize the risks from pirates, against whose incursions into the Firth there was built the fort whose remains we still see on Inchgarvie.

Noted as Leith was at this time for her seamen, her shipwrights were few and unskilled, for until the reign of James IV. the art of shipbuilding had been little practised in Scotland. Most of her ships had been built



in the Netherlands and in France, and, as her relations with England could never be called friendly even in



SCULPTURED STONE FROM SHIP CARPENTERS' CONVENING HOUSE,  
NOW IN COBURG STREET.

times of peace, it was to France she now went for shipwrights to begin the work of naval construction in Leith,

and to train its workmen in their craft. And so towards the close of the year 1502 John Lorans, "the French wricht that cam first for the schip bigging" (building), arrived in Leith. He was followed by others, mostly from Normandy and Brittany. Among these was Jacques Terrell, who afterwards became master wright and chief naval constructor of the *Great Michael*. A greater difficulty than labour, however, was obtaining oak "tymir" for the work, and we see Barton, Terrell, and others sent all over the country, and even to France, "to cheis tymir for the schip." This ship was the *Margaret*, named after the young Queen Margaret Tudor, whose marriage with James the Leithers had celebrated with such joy as a bond of perpetual peace with the "auld enemy." A special dockyard had been prepared for the *Margaret*. In January 1505 she was launched with much sounding of trumpets and playing of minstrels, as became so unique an event, whose success was chiefly due to the wisdom and skill of Jacques Terrell.

There were further rejoicings and flourish of trumpets when the masts were erected, when coins for luck were placed under the heel of each, as we now put them in the foundation stones of buildings. All her other equipment of tackle, sails, and ropes had to be imported from Flanders, for the great roperies of Leith, whose business connection is now world-wide, did not arise for more than two hundred years after the days of James IV. Leith, however, at this time, from having no great depth of water, was found not quite suitable for a shipbuilding port. It was only after nearly a hundred casks had been lashed to the *Margaret's* hull that she could be floated out of her dockyard, and the king and Jacques Terrell were thus led to seek a new haven, where there was a greater depth of water, about a mile farther west.

## Chapter XVI.

### LEITH'S SEA-DOGS: SIR ANDREW WOOD.

IN his endeavours to make Scotland a power on the sea James IV. was ably seconded by the sailormen of Leith. The number of noted sea-captains belonging to the Port at this time was out of all proportion to its size. This was owing to Leith being the port, not only for the larger town of Edinburgh, but also, now that Berwick had become an English town, for the whole south-east of Scotland, and especially for the wool trade of the great Border abbeys. Then, again, commerce was the monopoly in those days of the freemen of the royal burghs only, so that in an unfree town like Leith sailing was the occupation that offered the greatest opportunities of wealth and advancement to lads of push and enterprise.

In no other port of Europe at this time of equal size could there have been found more daring captains, and few could have rivalled Leith in her number of bold and skilful mariners, for seafaring was in their blood. It had been the occupation of the men folk of many Leith families through long generations, and even in our days of steamships, when the sailorman is degenerating into the mere deck hand, there are still a few families in the town with whom seafaring has been a tradition for centuries. The navy of James IV. could neither

have been built nor manned had he not had the sailormen of Leith behind him.

Among Leith's noted mariners at this time none had won a greater name for himself than Sir Andrew Wood of Largo, who was a Leith man born and bred. He first comes upon the stage of history in the reign of James III. as the commander of two ships of about three hundred tons each—the *Flower* and the *Yellow Carvel*. The *Yellow Carvel* belonged to the king, and had formerly been commanded by the veteran John Barton. Wood hired this vessel at so much a voyage, or even at so much per annum, as was the custom of those days, but the *Flower* was his own vessel.

With these two ships Wood made frequent trading voyages to France, and still more to the Low Countries. In Andrew Halyburton's ledger we get glimpses of both him and the *Flower* in the old Dutch town of Bergen-op-Zoom, then one of the most flourishing towns in Holland, though now unimportant. His reputation for seamanship had early recommended him to the favour of the king, who bestowed upon him the lands of Largo on the condition that he should accompany the king and queen to the holy well and shrine of St. Adrian on the Isle of May as often as he was required to do so.

Wood had developed a great genius for naval warfare by his frequent encounters with Dutch, English, and Portuguese pirates in defence of his ships and their cargoes. From his many victories over these enemies he has been called the Scottish "Nelson" of his time. He was the trusted servant of James III., by whom he had been employed on several warlike missions, which he carried out with fidelity to his king and honour to himself. Two of these expeditions were his successful defence of Dumbarton Castle against the fleet of Edward

IV. in 1481, and his attack on the fleet of Sir Edward Howard, which the English king had sent to do as much mischief as it could along the shores of the Firth of Forth. It was for these important services against the English that James III. gave Wood a part of the lands of Largo, which he had previously occupied as a tenant of the king.

In those days money was scarce and rents were usually paid in kind—



THE VAULTS, GILES STREET.

that is, in the produce of the land. The feu-duties of much land in Leith are still reckoned in amounts of grain and vary with its market price. The Black Vaults of Logan of Coatfield were partly used for the storage of such rents.

And so we find Sir Andrew Wood, in the days when he was only tenant of Largo, and not laird, constantly engaged in shipping grain from Largo to Leith. Grain, then as now, bulked considerably in Leith's imports; but whereas most of it now comes from abroad, in the days of James III., and for several centuries after, it was all, except in times of dearth, home grown. Scotland in those days was self-sustaining—that is, she grew all her own food.

Sir Andrew Wood is no less noted for his faithful adherence to James III. when opposed by his rebellious and traitorous nobles, like old "Bell-the-Cat," than for his skill and courage as a naval commander. In his flight from the battlefield of Sauchieburn the ill-fated



king is supposed to have been making his way to the shores of the Forth opposite Alloa, where Sir Andrew had gone with his two ships in aid of his royal master. All that long sunny June afternoon he kept several boats close by the shore to receive the king if defeat should overtake his arms, as it did, but the tragedy at Beaton Mill rendered the loyal sailorman's vigil vain.

After the battle the insurgent lords proclaimed James IV. king at Stirling, and then marched east to the capture of Edinburgh Castle. It was for this purpose they encamped on Leith Links for two days, and at the same time appear to have occupied the King's Wark on the Shore. The fate of James III. was as yet unknown, but, as report declared that Sir Andrew Wood's ships had been seen taking on board men wounded in the battle, it was thought the king might have found refuge with their gallant commander aboard the *Yellow Carvel*. Wood had by this time come to anchor in Leith Roads some two miles off the shore. Sir Andrew was requested to come before the young King James IV. and his council to tell what he knew of the fate of James III., but this the wary seaman refused to do until two hostages of rank were sent aboard the *Yellow Carvel* to ensure his safe return.

On the arrival of the hostages—Lord Seton and Lord Fleming—aboard his ship the loyal and gallant Wood, seated in his great barge, at once steered for the Shore, the oars glittering in the sunlight as with measured stroke the boat swept past the Mussel Cape, now crowned by the Martello Tower, and, entering the old harbour, made straight for the landing-stage opposite the King's Wark. Here Wood boldly confronted the haughty confederate lords. When asked by the young and now repentant king if his father was aboard his ships, Wood replied that he wished he were, when he would defend

and keep him scathless from all the traitors who had cruelly murdered him.

The traitor "Bell-the-Cat" and the other rebel lords scowled angrily at these bold words, but, fearful of what might befall their two friends in pledge aboard the ships, could not further resent them. Finding they could make nothing of the undaunted Wood, they dismissed him to his ships, where his men, impatient and alarmed at his delay, were about to swing the two hostages from the yardarm in the belief that some treachery had befallen their much-loved commander. Authentic news of the cruel fate that had overtaken James III. soon came to hand, and then Sir Andrew Wood gave in his allegiance to his successor, and became one of his most trusted friends and counsellors. In the work of constructing royal dockyards at Leith and Newhaven, and in his ambition to make Scotland's name a power on the sea, James IV. found no more wise and powerful supporter than the brave Sir Andrew Wood.

The year after James IV. ascended the throne five English ships entered the Firth of Forth, ravaged the shores of Fife and the Lothians, and did much damage among trading vessels making for Leith and other ports on the Forth. Now, while there was never really peace between the two countries on the high seas, such an outrage as this James determined should not go unpunished. He ordered Sir Andrew Wood to go in pursuit of the enemy. With never a thought of the odds against him, that gallant captain at once weighed anchor, and, under a heavy press of sail decorated with the royal arms and those of the brave Sir Andrew himself, as you may see in the pictures of the *Yellow Carvel* and the *Great Michael*, his two stately ships stood down the Firth with a favouring breeze behind them.

All was bustle and activity on board, getting the decks cleared for action, which, in those stirring and romantic days, meant rather cumbering them with the guns of the arquebusiers. These had all to be set on their stands to sweep the enemy's decks and cripple her sails and rigging in order to render her unmanageable. Sir Andrew and his officers were harnessed in full armour like knights ashore, while the men, accoutred in their jacks or steel-padded jackets and steel caps, armed themselves from racks of axes, guns, and boarding pikes, that were framed round the masts and the bulwarks of poop and quarter-deck. The cross-bowmen were sent to their stations in the fighting-tops or cages round the masts, from which they could shoot arrows or hurl down heavy missiles on the enemy's deck.

The *Yellow Carvel* and her consort, the *Flower*, came up with the English ships off Dunbar. All undaunted by the unequal contest, Wood at once blew his whistle, the signal for action, and the battle forthwith began. The boarders stood by with the grappling irons, and, when the ships closed in upon one another, they were caught by the irons below and by the hooks for the same purpose projecting from the ends of the yardarms aloft. Their locked hulls then formed one great platform, over which the fierce and stubborn fight raged for hours with uncertain issue, while the men in the fighting-tops threw down missiles on the mass of swaying combatants below as they saw opportunity. At length the skill and courage of the Leith sailormen prevailed, and overcame the superior force of the English. With the fighting-tops of his now crippled ships gay with streamers and banners that even swept the surface of the sea, Wood convoyed the five English prizes in triumph to the Port, and the name of the great Leith captain, so

the story goes, "became a by-word and a terror to all the shippers and mariners of England."

Sir Andrew was richly rewarded by James for his great services, and in some measure to make up for the losses he had sustained, and, as no castle could be built



THE "YELLOW CARVEL."

(From a drawing by Cynicus.)

without the king's permission, licence was given him to erect such at Largo as a defence against English pirates who, in raiding the shores of Fife, would never fail to make his dwelling a special object of attack. This castle, according to the same old chronicler, he is said to have compelled some English pirates captured at sea to build by way of ransom.

Henry VII., indignant at the disgrace brought upon the English flag by so humiliating a defeat, is said to have offered an annual pension of £1,000 to any English captain who should capture the ships of Wood and take him prisoner. Now, unless history utterly belies the character of Henry VII., such a story is entirely out of keeping with all we know of him, for he was a man of peace and loved money even to miserliness. Be that as it may, one Stephen Bull, when other English captains had declined to attempt so risky an enterprise, equipped three ships, and determined to bring Wood to London dead or alive. We know little of Bull beyond the fact that he was knighted by Sir Edward Howard in Brittany in 1512, and we know nothing at all of his three ships, except that they were neither king's ships nor in the king's service.

But we have not read aright the story of the deeds of the Leith sailormen in days of yore if we have not learned that for merchant ships to be guilty of piratical attacks upon those of other nations, and to be sometimes captured by those they attacked, was a very common incident on the high seas in those lawless times. Indeed so common was it that it had been a long-established custom on the North Sea for mariners thus captured, when they were not made to "walk the plank," as they at times were, to be ransomed by their friends at the very moderate charge of twenty shillings a mariner and forty shillings the master or skipper.

With his three ships Bull sailed for the Forth in July 1490, and, entering the Firth, lay to behind the Isle of May. In the belief that peace had been established with England Wood had sailed for Flanders, partly by way of trade and partly as convoy to the merchant fleet. On a fine sunny morning in August Sir Andrew Wood's



two ships hove in sight, and all unconscious of the presence of the lurking enemy, steered their way towards the Forth. But no sooner did Wood perceive the English ships with the white flag and red cross of St. George than he at once gave the signal for immediate action, and fought "fra the ryssing of the sun till the gaeing doun of the same in the lang simmer's day, quhile all the men and women that dwelt near the coast syd stood and beheld the fighting, quhilk was terrible to sie."

This running fight was kept up for three days, when victory once more declared itself on the side of the seemingly invincible Leith captain, and, after taking the ships to Dundee, Wood and his prizes eventually came to Leith, bringing sorrow as well as joy to the town, for many a member of his crew had fallen in the desperate three days' encounter. These two naval victories of Sir Andrew Wood by which he is popularly known rest solely on the picturesque narrative of the gossipy Pit-scottie, who is not generally relied on unless corroborated by other writers. But we must remember that Pit-scottie was near neighbour to the Woods at Largo, and the familiar friend of Sir Andrew's second and more distinguished son John, who played a notable part in the service of James V. Besides, he was intimate with Sir Robert Barton, the first skipper of the *Great Michael*, and from him he got all the details of that famous ship.

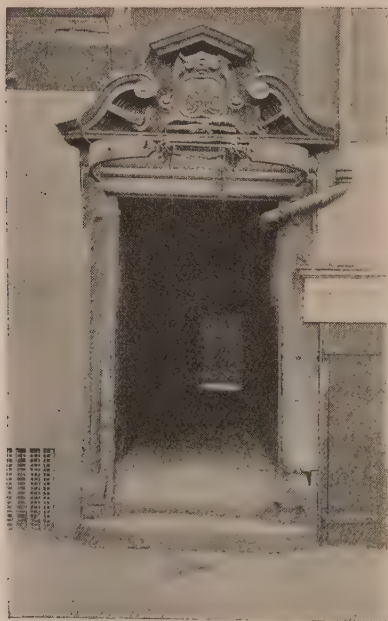
We have seen that Sir Andrew Wood had much to do with the construction of the king's dockyards at Leith and at Newhaven, and with the building of that navy in which James IV. was so interested. It was he who superintended the construction and equipment of the *Great Michael*, the largest ship built either in England or Scotland up to that time. She was the special pride

of the Leithers, who looked on her as one of the wonders of the age, as indeed she was. When the *Great Michael* was launched at Newhaven in 1511, Sir Andrew was made her quartermaster or principal captain, with Robert Barton under him as skipper or second captain.

On the outbreak of the Flodden campaign the command of this great vessel, the flagship of the fleet, was by a fatal error given, not to a skilful seaman like Sir Andrew Wood, or to Robert Barton, but to the Earl of Arran, as in feudal countries like Scotland any great office of state like that of Lord High Admiral had, in accordance with the customs of the age, to belong to the great feudal aristocracy. The fleet was as handsomely equipped as any British squadron of the present day; the complement of men including chaplains and "barbers," who in Scotland at that time, as everywhere else in Europe, combined with that trade the profession of surgeon, their guild being known as the "Incorporation of Chirurgeons and Barboures." The barber's pole with a brass bleeding-dish hanging from near its end was the sign of the Surgeon-Barbers' Guild in olden days.

From the date of this expedition we hear little more of Sir Andrew Wood. The great sailor died two years later, in 1515. He was buried in the family aisle in the ancient parish church of Largo, where his tomb is marked by a plain inscribed stone let into the floor. He has often been confused with his eldest son, who bore the same name as himself, with the result that Sir Andrew has been represented as living to a very old age. To this confusion, together with the fact that the remains of some great ditch, moat, or other earthwork seem to lead from his now ruined tower at Largo in the direction of the village, we owe the picturesque legend that, when

enfeebled by an old age he never reached, he caused a canal to be formed from his castle to the parish church which stands at the entrance to the ancient avenue, and that on this canal he used to sail in state to church in his barge, rowed by old pensioners with whom he had fought so many brave fights aboard that most storied ship in Scottish history, the *Yellow Carvel*.



DOORWAY, 37 SHORE.  
A relic of the King's Wark.

## Chapter XVII.

### LEITH'S SEA-DOGS: THE FIGHTING BARTONS.

ANOTHER noted family of Leith sailormen, who for several generations were the most renowned seafarers belonging to the Port, was that of the Bartons, one of whom, Wood's old friend, Sir Andrew Barton as he is so often called, although there is no record of his ever having been knighted, was among the most famous and daring sea-captains of his time. If Wood was the Scottish "Nelson" of his day, Andrew Barton was undoubtedly the Scottish "Drake."

The first of this family to come into prominence was John, a noted mariner of Leith, who, in the reign of James III., was skipper of the *Yellow Carvel*, described as one of the king's ships. Under his command the *Yellow Carvel* seems to have met a good deal of ill-fortune, for she was captured by the English, although afterwards restored by Edward IV., and was then nearly wrecked among the rocks off North Berwick before she won fame under the captaincy of the brave and skilful Sir Andrew Wood.

John Barton had three sons, all of whom rose to fame—Andrew, the eldest and most renowned; Robert, familiarly known among Leith sailor folk as Robin, and by the English, who held him in wholesome dread, as Hob o' Barton; and John, who was only less cele-

brated than his two elder brothers. All of them were distinguished naval officers of James IV., and skilled and daring navigators. They fought in many a stubborn sea fight between Norway and the Canaries. The names of all three brothers, and most frequently of all that of Andrew, occur in Andrew Halyburton's ledger, showing that they traded more or less regularly between Leith and the Low Countries.

For nearly a hundred years the Bartons carried on a kind of family war with the Portuguese. The quarrel began in 1476. In that year John Barton, the first of that family to come into fame, was voyaging from the port of Sluis, in Flanders, homeward bound in the good ship *Juliana*, laden with a valuable cargo, when he was attacked by two armed Portuguese vessels. After a stout resistance the *Juliana* was captured, and the survivors among the crew were thrust into a boat and cut adrift. Among them was their gallant skipper, John Barton, who made his way to Lisbon to seek redress for the wrong that had been done him, but in vain ; nor were the efforts of James III. with Alfonso V., King of Portugal, any more successful.

Letters of reprisal, or warrants, were therefore granted by the Scottish king to the Barton family, authorizing them to seize Portuguese vessels and cargoes until they had made good their father's losses, which were reckoned at 12,000 ducats, or about £6,000—a great sum for those times. Andrew Barton seems to have been the most active of the three brothers in capturing the richly laden caravels of Portugal returning from India and Africa. The Portuguese were not slow to retaliate, and for years a regular war on the high seas ensued between the Bartons and other bold Leith mariners on the one hand, and the Portuguese on the other. But such piratical attacks,



both unauthorized and those authorized by letters of marque or reprisal, were ordinary incidents of fifteenth-century navigation.

Among the captures of the Bartons from the Portuguese that made a great sensation in Leith and Edinburgh were two negro maids, who had no doubt been carried off from the coast of Guinea to be sold as slaves. A much more kindly destiny, however, was in store for them. The Bartons presented the "Moorish lasses," as they were popularly called, to King James IV., who not only accepted the gift but took the greatest interest in their welfare. A devoted son of the Church, he had them baptized as Margaret and Ellen, perhaps after the youthful Queen Margaret and the wife of the Governor of Edinburgh Castle, where they were housed as maids to some of the Court ladies. Dunbar, the great Scottish poet of that time, who knew the "Moorish lasses" well, reflects their happy lot in his poem entitled "Ane Black-Moor":—

"Quhen she is claid in riche apparel  
She blinks as bright as ane tar barrel,  
My ladye with the mekle lippis."

At this time a small fleet of Scottish merchantmen sailing in company, as they so often did as a precaution against pirates, was attacked by some Dutch ships. The Scottish vessels were plundered, and their crews and the merchants who sailed with them were thrown overboard, for merchants or their factors usually accompanied their wares oversea in those days when the post did not exist and orders could not be made by letter. Andrew Barton, whose daring and skill had early recommended him to the favour of King James, was dispatched with ships to avenge this act of savagery.

Barton completely cleared the Scottish coasts of the Dutch ships, and sent to the king a number of barrels full of the heads of the Dutch pirates as a token of the thoroughness with which he had carried out his orders.

It was on account of these attacks on the Portuguese that Robert Barton was arrested and his ship, the *Lion*, seized by the magistrates of Campvere, in Holland, at the instance of some Portuguese merchants who had been despoiled by the Bartons. He was sentenced to be hung as a pirate if he did not make good their losses; but Robin Barton was not to die so ingloriously. James IV. wrote to Margaret of Savoy with all the confidence of one who had no doubt as to the issue, explaining that the attacks against the Portuguese were perfectly legitimate, as they had been done under letters of marque given by himself; and the result was, as James had so confidently anticipated, that Barton and his ship were set free.

This ship of Robert Barton's would seem to have been the same great war vessel aboard which his gallant brother, Andrew Barton, fought his last fight in August 1511. If this be so, then it shows us, what indeed we know from other sources, that, like the rest of their ships, the *Lion* was a joint possession of the Barton family and their friends. Joint-ownership of vessels was the method adopted by shipowners in Leith and other Scottish ports to minimize their losses from the manifold perils of the sea in mediæval times, when marine insurance, though common in Italy, the Netherlands, and even in England, was unknown in Scotland. Whether this great ship of the Bartons was a capture from the Portuguese which they renamed the *Lion*, or whether they had bought her in France or the Netherlands, as was then customary, since shipbuilding had not as yet

arisen as an industry in the Port, we have now no means of knowing.

On the capture of the *Lion* by the Howards the Bartons immediately replaced her by another ship of the same name equally large, for among the warships James IV. sent to help France during the Flodden campaign was one named the *Lion*, under the command of Robert Barton. After his death in 1538 the *Lion* became the possession of his nephew John, the worthy successor in skill and courage of his famous uncles. That this second *Lion* was in no way behind her more noted predecessor in size and equipment we learn from the all too brief notice of her untoward fate. "There is great maine (grief) here," wrote an English spy from Edinburgh in March 1547, "for a Scots ship of war, the *Lion*, wrecked near Dover with eleven score men (that is, fighting men), besides mariners." We can well believe, as a letter of James VI.'s to the Kirk Session of South Leith Church tells us, that in those troublous days "poor widows and orphans" of sailormen were always numerous in Leith.

Ever since the marriage of James III. with the saintly Margaret of Denmark there had been a close alliance between Scotland and that country which continued to the Union of the Crowns, and led to much coming and going between Copenhagen and Leith. In 1508 Andrew Barton was sent with ships to assist Denmark in her struggle with the powerful city of Lübeck, the head of the Hanseatic League. But the career of Andrew Barton soon after this came to an end. He had been cruising on the look-out for the richly laden ships of Portugal as they returned from the Indies and the Guinea coast. This capture of Portuguese merchantmen inflicted serious damage on the commerce of Lon-

don, and the merchants of that city raised a clamour against the interference with their trade.

Henry VIII. had sent no complaint against the brilliant Leith sailorman to the Scottish king.

Evidently he had none to send, for Henry was never slow to air and make the most of a grievance when he had one. Indeed there does not seem to be any act of unlicensed piracy recorded against the Bartons. But that mattered little to the English, who, jealous that Scottish seamen should match, if not even outrival, their mariners on the sea, determined to effect Barton's capture. At the earnest request of Sir Thomas and Sir Edward Howard, the latter of whom afterwards perished in such another fight against the French, Henry allowed them to fit out an expedition against Barton, who had with him his great ship, the *Lion*, and her pinnace, the *Jenny Pirwin*.

The Howards were piloted by the skipper of a merchant vessel which Barton had plundered the previous day. They came up with him in the Downs. The dread with which the name of the great Leith sailorman had filled the English seamen is well seen in the reply a sixteenth-century balladist puts into the mouth of this skipper, Henry Hunt, when requested by the Howards to steer their ships to Barton's haunts :—

“ Were ye but twenty ships, and he but one,  
I swear by kirk, and bower, and hall,  
He would overcome them every one,  
If once his beams they do downfall.”

On approaching Barton the English vessels showed neither colours nor ensigns as was the rule with all ships, and especially ships of war even then, but put up willow wands on their masts,

“ As merchants use that sayle the sea,”

the old balladist tells us, but the beams and other contrivances on Barton's ship for overwhelming an enemy's deck are a pure invention on his part to add to the dramatic effect of his story. Barton, in no way dismayed by the odds against him, boldly engaged the enemy, and with his whistle suspended about his neck by a chain of gold encouraged his men in the desperate conflict. With such opponents as the Howards, Barton well knew that the battle could only end with the death or capture of himself or them.

“ ‘ Fight on, my men,’ Sir Andrew says,  
 ‘ And never flinch before the foe ;  
 And stand fast by St. Andrew’s Cross  
 As long’s you hear my whistle blow.’ ”

By St. Andrew's Cross he meant the Scottish flag or ensign. Easily distinguished by his rich dress and bright armour, Barton became a special target for his enemies' marksmen. He was mortally wounded early in the fight, but even then continued to encourage his men with his whistle as long as life remained to him. At length his whistle was heard no longer, and, on the Howards boarding his vessel, they found that the gallant Leith captain was slain. Thus died Andrew Barton, the most famous and brilliant sailorman that ever sailed from the Port of Leith in an age when Leith mariners had hardly any rivals, and might with truth be said to have held

“ From Noroway’s shores to Cape de Verde,  
 The mastery of the deep.”

His ship, the *Lion*, was carried into the Thames, and became, after the *Great Harry*, the largest man-of-war in the English navy—a remarkable tribute to the Port of Leith and the enterprise of her daring skippers.



James sent a herald to King Henry to demand redress for the slaughter of his favourite officer in time of peace, and compensation for the loss of his ships. Henry haughtily replied that the fate of pirates should be no cause of dispute between princes, an answer that only aggravated the insult to the Scottish flag, for Barton, as Henry well knew, was no more pirate than the Howards themselves. The English king, indeed, freed Barton's crew, giving them a small sum to defray the cost of their homeward journey; but this failed to satisfy King James, and the dispute was finally fought out on Flodden Field.

The rocks and shoals of the Northumberland coast sent many a Scottish ship to its doom in those old days of unlighted and uncharted seas. There in the reign of James III., off Bamborough, was wrecked the great trading barge of the good Bishop Kennedy of St. Andrews, and there, too, was dashed "in flinders" one of James IV.'s ships, the *Treasurer*, no doubt named in honour of Sir Robert Barton, the King's Lord High Treasurer, who had purchased her in Dieppe. In Embleton Bay, just north of the great ruined castle of Dunstanburgh, there lies a rock a foot or two beneath the yellow sand whose interest for Leithers is very great.

It is only uncovered at long intervals by the wash of the waves, and then by the same agency buried again. A few years ago, while exposed to view, its surface showed in ancient rudely carved letters the famous name of "Andrea Barton." A rubbing of this inscription has been taken in case it should not again see the light. Embleton Bay must often have been familiar with the sight of Barton's flag as he sailed southward from the Forth, it may be on some venture against the Portingals. But who carved the hero's name on the surface of this

now hidden rock, whether he himself to commemorate some victory over the English, or whether some admiring follower as he rode at anchor in the bay, we may never know. The rock evidently has some secret to reveal, but what that secret is has remained undiscovered.

That the incident has been forgotten is typical of most of the exploits of our Scottish "Drake," for although rehearsed with pride round the winter fire in the Leith of the brave days of James IV. they have long ago passed out of memory. Some of them may again be revealed by as yet unpublished papers in the State archives of Portugal. But the Bartons were an able race, and their fame did not die when James IV.'s most brilliant sailorman fell in the unequal conflict with the Howards in August 1511. His brothers Robert and John, only just less celebrated than himself, had been associated with him in some of his exploits against the Portuguese. They continued and maintained the family fame; and the fighting Bartons of Leith were known and held in wholesome respect by all the seafaring folk of Western Europe.

In 1513 the English ambassador complained to James IV. that the Bartons had done Englishmen so much harm, perhaps by way of reprisal for the slaughter of their brother Andrew, that they were greatly excited against them. "England has sustained three times as much damage at sea from the Scots as they have from us," wrote Lord Dacre, Henry's able but unscrupulous commander on the Border, with the Leith sailormen in his mind. No wonder Henry VIII. wrote in his wrath to James IV.: "As to Hob à Barton and Davy Falconer their deeds have shown what they be." They had. "Two ships of Leith have taken seven prizes of the Islande Flote (the English Baltic trading fleet)

and taken them to Leith," wrote Dacre again to Wolsey. "Unless the Zealand Flote (the English merchant fleet trading with Holland) be better guarded they will be in great danger." As long as Leith continued to send forth such gallant sea captains English pirates could no longer plunder Scottish ships and murder Scottish seamen as they had done, and as they were to do again under the nerveless foreign policy of James VI., when Scottish mariners were neither encouraged nor supported, and the great race of Leith sailormen came to an end.

Ships voyaging to France, unless they formed a considerable fleet, usually went North-about—that is, they steered north instead of south on leaving the Forth, and sailed through the Pentland Firth and down the west coast. Ships from France often came no farther than Ayr, a frequent landing-place of French ambassadors. Ayr was then the chief port on the "West Seys," as the waters washing our southern and western shores were then called. From Ayr the cargoes were sent overland to Stirling, whence they were sent down the Forth to Leith. Most of the wine taken aboard the fleet of James IV. before it sailed for France during the Flodden campaign was brought from the "West Seys" by this route.

But the risks of attack by the English fleet patrolling the Narrow Seas of the Strait of Dover and the English Channel had no terrors for Robin Barton and his close friend and companion, Davy Falconer, with whom he so often sailed in company. "The six ships under the command of Hob à Barton (Robin Barton), the Lord High Treasurer, and Davy Falconer," wrote Dacre to Surrey in 1512, "are ready decked to carry their determination through the Narrow Seas to France." Some-

times their daring cost them dear, for after such information as that of Dacre's the English fleet lay in wait for the bold Leithers. It failed to find them on the outward voyage, but on their return Barton and Falconer, with whom Will Brownhill, another daring Leith navigator, was now sailing, ran plump into the whole English fleet. Brownhill used to boast that he never encountered an English ship at sea without fighting her. On this occasion, however, it was the English who encountered him, and a hot time they gave him.

The odds were such that the Leith men's only chance was to dash through the English host as best they could. Barton and the redoubtable Will Brownhill won through with the utmost difficulty, but Falconer was captured and his ship "drounit" or sunk. Falconer was "shrewitly handellit," by which phrase we readily understand he was by no means chivalrously treated. Certainly the English had suffered much at his hands. He was taken to London and safely lodged in prison, where Henry VIII. determined that "for his manifold piracies"—he would have been more truthful had he said for having outmatched the English at their own game—Falconer should die.

But the Shore of Leith had not yet seen the last of Falconer's flag. Among the Port's sea-captains none had a warmer place in King James's heart than Davy Falconer, his "familiar servant," as he called him. Perhaps the King saw in this seaman's dash and spirit something akin to his own, for, like all great sailormen, Falconer seems to have believed that no seaman was worthy of the name who was not bold even to rashness. With the aid of Lord Dacre, Henry's ablest and most distinguished officer on the Borders, James effected Falconer's release, but beyond this nothing more is told us. We

must ever lament the scant records that tell us so little of the gallant deeds of those bold Leith sailormen, who raised Scotland's name on the sea to such a pitch of fame in those brave days of old. We could have wished that that graphic and picturesque chronicler, Pitscottie, had been less curious about the details of the *Great Michael*, and more interested in the exploits of her daring and clever skipper, Robin Barton, and his seafaring friends like Davy Falconer. Had Pitscottie, like another Hakluyt, gone in and out among the Leith sailormen and recorded for later generations the moving tales of their adventures, what a stirring chapter might we not have possessed to-day about their exploits, and in what a setting of romance would we see them when viewed through the long vista of over four hundred years !

Like Sir Andrew Wood, Robert Barton became a feudal baron, for in 1507 James IV. not only knighted him, but, for his great services, gave him a gift of the lands of Barnton beside Cramond. From over the corbelled parapet wall of the ancient keep that stood here in Barton's time he would have long sea views beyond the May and the Bass to remind him of his stirring adventures of younger days.

The Woods, the Bartons, the Napiers of Merchiston, and the Touris of Inverleith are among the earliest instances in our history of merchants becoming great landowners, and taking their place among the aristocracy without relinquishing their merchandising, as custom would have compelled them to do in France or Germany. Here we see the influence of such centres of trade and commerce as Edinburgh and Leith in overthrowing the old feudalism, with its mediæval notions about the profession of arms being the only fit occupation for a gentleman. All the noble families in and around our



neighbourhood to-day, with two notable exceptions—those of Buccleuch and Lothian—were founded by Edinburgh and Leith traders and merchants. Sir Robert Barton's training in commerce gave him great skill in money matters and the keeping of accounts. It was for this reason he was made Lord High Treasurer or Comptroller and Master of the Mint. We have a pen-portrait of him in a letter from the English ambassador in Scotland to Wolsey, in which we are shown Barton as a man of great wealth for a Scotsman. He still sent shipping ventures to the Netherlands, France, and the Baltic, but he himself now seldom voyaged over the seas.

Some of his ships, like the *Black Barque of Abbeville*, were seized by pirates, and the crews and factors shamefully used. He became a generous friend to Margaret Tudor after the catastrophe of Flodden, giving her of his ample means when she was often penniless through her own imprudence and dishonest tenants refusing to pay to her their rents. He was “ane very pyrett and sey-revare comptroller,” said Gavin Douglas, the son of the traitor Bell-the-Cat, to Henry VIII.; but no patriotic Scot and officer of the Crown at this time, however wise and able, could be good in the eyes of a Douglas. Barton continued to live far into the reign of James V., when he took a leading part in opposing the restrictions the Edinburgh merchant burgesses placed upon the freedom of the Leith mariners.

Sir Robert Barton died in 1538. He was succeeded by his son, of the same name as himself, who added the princely domain of Barnbogle and Dalmeny to that of Barnton by marrying Barbara Moubray, the only daughter and heiress of the long and noble line of the Moubrays, whose ancestor, Sir Philip, had held Stirling Castle for Edward I. down to the day of Bannockburn.

On his marriage Robert Barton assumed the name and arms of Moubray; but in the days of Queen Mary the fortunes of the family began to decline, and one by one they had to part with their estates, until at last, in 1614, they had even to sell Barnbogle. Barnton was purchased by Lord Balmerino, who by his acquisition of the lands of Restalrig in 1604 had become laird of that barony in place of the Logans.

While the Bartons and Sir Andrew Wood are the best known and most famous of the Leith sea captains of the days of James IV., they were not the only mariners of note who belonged to the Port. A goodly number of others might be named, who in their day were only less famous than the great captains whose names are so familiar to all. Some of these have already appeared in this history. There were Sir Alexander Makkison and Will Brownhill. There was Will Merrymouth, whose daring in fight and skill in seamanship had won him the soubriquet of "King of the Sea," and then there was the bold and intrepid Davy Falconer, of whose adventurous career something has already been said. He appears along with Sir Robert Barton as one of the heroes in *The Yellow Frigate*, James Grant's fascinating romance about the Leith "Sea-dogs" of the days of James IV., as Sir David Falconer of Bo'ness.

But, like Andrew Barton, Falconer never seems to have had the honour of knighthood, and there is little doubt he was of the family of Peter Falconer who founded and endowed the altar to St. Peter in the Lady Kirk of Leith in 1490. He had no sooner been released by the English in 1512 than he sailed for France. Returning later in the year he hugged the dangerous Flemish and Dutch coasts so as to avoid the English, and then, driven before a terrific storm, sailed straight across the North

Sea and entered the Firth on a dark night in December. Finding it impossible to make the Port of Leith, Falconer, who was at the helm, ran before the gale right up the Firth away beyond the Ferry, but fired two guns as he passed the harbour mouth. These so greatly alarmed the burgesses of Edinburgh that for three hours together they rang the common bell, which still strikes the hours in St. Giles' spire, although it has been recast twice since those days, and every man, donning his armour, rushed to the City Cross in the belief that the English were in the Forth.

Davy Falconer, like all the Leith sailormen, was passionately loyal to king and country. When James V. had freed himself from the hated thralldom of the Douglasses, and was besieging the traitorous brood in their stronghold of Tantallon, Davy Falconer, from his experience in ship's guns, went as captain of the artillery, but the massive towers defied all attempts to capture them despite the efforts of "many ingenious men, both Scotch and French, although never so much was ever done in vain to win one house." James gave up the siege and returned with the army to Edinburgh, leaving a company of foot to follow with the artillery.

But "that same night a little after moonrise" Angus sallied forth with eightscore horse and attacked and defeated them, slaying Davy Falconer, who was gallantly covering the retreat, "the principal captain of foot and their best man-o'-warman on the sea," wrote the English ambassador Magnus, not without the feeling that his news would not be unwelcome to his royal master. And so by the hands of the traitor Earl of Angus and his Scots died Davy Falconer, one of the most gallant and chivalrous of that choice company of great Leith sea

captains who were ever loyal to the king and devoted to the service of their country, and who did so much for Scotland's name and fame on the sea when there was little, if any, patriotism among those in high places.



THE "LION" IN LEITH ROADS.  
(From a drawing by Cynicus.)

## Chapter XVIII.

### THE RISE OF NEWHAVEN.

WHILE we know the names of a large number of Scottish ships belonging to James IV.'s time, we cannot always distinguish the vessels of the king from those of other owners. A recent great writer of Scottish history, however, estimates that the navy of James at its best consisted of sixteen large ships and ten small ones. Such a large fleet of royal vessels shows us that, even although the king sometimes purchased ships from abroad, his own dockyards at home must also have been unusually busy.

The *Margaret* was perhaps the largest Scottish vessel then afloat ; but James was ambitious to possess ships still larger. From the difficulties encountered by the ingenious Jacques Terrell, James's master wright and chief naval designer, in floating the *Margaret* over the entrance of her dockyard at the Shore it was evident there was not sufficient depth of water to permit of the construction of larger vessels at Leith. But by men like James IV., Sir Andrew Wood, and the Bartons, this difficulty was soon overcome. Little more than a mile farther west the depth of water at high tides was much greater than at Leith, and there the king resolved to construct new dockyards for the building of larger ships, while he still retained those at Leith for constructing vessels of normal size. This resolution had no sooner



been arrived at than work was begun, and even before the *Margaret* was ready for sea the Novus Portus de Leith—that is, the New Haven or Harbour of Leith, and now so well known as the fishing village of Newhaven—was in process of formation.

The land on the west side of the Water of Leith, however, did not belong to the king. It was the property of the abbot and canons of Holyrood, and would require to be purchased from them before any new harbour could be constructed there; but the royal ships and shipyards had already cost so much that Sir Robert Barton, the clever keeper of the king's purse, had little money wherewith to indulge in any new expenditure. But difficulties only appeared to be at once overcome; for the king gave the abbot and canons a portion of his rich lands in and around Linlithgow for some acres of the grassy lands so long known as the Links of North Leith, of which all that remains to-day is the Free Fishermen's Park adjacent to the Whale Brae.

In 1504 trees to the number of one hundred and sixty-three were purchased from the Laird of Inverleith for the construction of the new village. The labourers employed in this work were lodged in a great pavilion brought from Edinburgh Castle and erected on the grassy links until houses were built. But housing was pushed on rapidly, and Newhaven became ere long quite a large village and the seat of a considerable population, of whom many were French, some Flemings, and others Dutch. Mingled with these were a few Spaniards, Danes, and Portuguese.

As James, like his mother before him, was devoted to the Church, he early made provision for the spiritual welfare of his many shipwrights and other workmen at Newhaven. We find that the building of a chapel

dedicated to the Virgin and St. James was going on in 1505, and in little more than a year afterwards we see it open for service and the king presenting it with a silver chalice or communion cup. The only remains of this chapel to be found in Newhaven to-day are the west gable of the nave which stands on the right as you



REMAINS OF THE CHAPEL OF ST. MARY AND ST. JAMES,  
NEWHAVEN.

go down the Westmost Close, and its little God's-Acre which forms a green enclosure adjacent in Main Street. Our ancestors in these old times had a happy gift of putting much poetry into their place-names, and so, from the fact of their chapel being dedicated to the Virgin, Newhaven was commonly known by the highly poetic name of Our Lady's Port of Grace.

As the building of a fleet was an undertaking very

dear to James's heart, we soon find him showing the greatest interest in the construction of the New Haven by frequent visits to the works from his royal palaces at Holyrood and Linlithgow, and by encouraging the workmen with gifts of the inevitable "drink-silver," as in 1504, when he sent fourteen shillings by the hand of Sir Robert Barton to "the marinaris that settis up the bulwerk of the New Haven." Three years later, in 1507, the works were still being extended, for in that year



THE CHURCHYARD, NEWHAVEN.

we find another bulwark erected and a new dock being excavated.

No sooner was the first dock ready than shipbuilding began, and preparations were made for the construction of a warship superior to any yet afloat. We find timber and other material for the "great

ship," afterwards known to fame as the *Great Michael*, being brought from many quarters and stored in the King's Wark on the Shore of Leith and at Newhaven.

This great ship seems to have been laid on the stocks about 1507, and her construction was carried out under the superintendence of Sir Andrew Wood, perhaps the greatest of James's many sea captains. In a poem addressed to the king himself by William Dunbar, the famous Scots poet of that time, we have a brief but graphic word-picture of the stir and bustle that reigned in the naval yards of Leith and Newhaven at this period—a word-picture undoubtedly suggested by what he had

so often seen at these places with his own eyes. In this poem Dunbar talks of the

“ Carpenters,  
Builders of barks and ballingars,  
Masons lying upon the land,  
And shipwrights hewing upon the strand.”

To Lindsay of Pitscottie, in Fife, perhaps the most picturesque and attractive writer of Scots history, we owe much interesting information about the building of the *Great Michael*. Although doubt has been thrown on many of the details of his graphic narrative, yet we must remember that Pitscottie was near neighbour to the Woods of Largo, and is therefore likely to have had authentic information about Sir Andrew and the great ship of which he was commander. Pitscottie, after the manner of the old balladists, tells us that the *Great Michael* was “ a year and a day ” in building ; but that is only his picturesque Scots way of saying that she took a long time to build, and we know from other sources that she must have been on the stocks for four years at least.

During this long period James took the deepest interest in every detail of her construction, and was therefore a frequent visitor to Newhaven, where his kindly consideration and attractive manner, as in Leith, soon won for him the devoted and affectionate loyalty of the whole population. No accident to any of the workmen and no case of sickness among the villagers ever failed to call forth his kindly sympathy and ready help. We find him giving fourteen shillings to “ ane pure wyff becaus hir husband brak his leg at the king's werk and had nathing to amend it with.” One of his French shipwrights died and was buried in the little

churchyard of St. Mary's Chapel. The king not only paid all the expenses of the illness and burial, but also sent the widow back to her native Rouen to which she longed to return. Even the poor charwoman who kept the court that led to the works is not forgotten when she "is fallen seik." The king's courteous and kindly bearing encouraged even the humblest of his subjects to approach him with freedom.

There must have been fishermen in Newhaven even in those early days of its history, for we find James going with them to the oyster-dredging. As the fishers were accustomed to sing songs while at work, and the king was passionately fond of music, we may be sure the "dreg song" was struck up on these occasions, for

"The oysters are a gentle kin',  
They winna tak unless ye sing."

In 1506, a year when summer days were more than usually fine, a Newhaven woman brought the king the first strawberries of the season, a fruit for which James had a particular fondness, while on another occasion he received a gift of plums "at the bridge end of the New Haven." Again we see him later in the same season purchasing "hony peris" from a fruitseller at the pier end. A pleasant place evidently was this Newhaven of long ago, with its cottages set in shady gardens, gay with blossom in the pleasant springtime, and rich with fruit in mellow autumn, the honey pears and the plums in all likelihood from trees grown from slips brought by James's French shipwrights from the sunnier and warmer shores of Normandy and Brittany.

Sometimes King James rode down from Holyrood in the early morning on his favourite steed Grey Gretno, when the exercise and fresh morning air put rather a



keen edge on his appetite. On such occasions, there being no inn at this time in Newhaven, he “disjonit” (French *déjeuner*—to breakfast) at the house of one of his French shipwrights, whose wife was seemingly known to local fame as a cook skilled beyond her neighbours. Royal visits were everyday incidents in Newhaven in those distant days.

Perhaps the most pleasing Newhaven memories associated with those of James IV. are connected with the nameless little Newhaven girl to whose identity we have no clue whatever, for the king never speaks of her except as “the little lass.” Children, unless they are of royal blood, do not figure largely in State documents, and are not often met with in local history. King James, however, always seemed to be specially interested in them; it might be because he had lost so many of his own, “which grevit him sae sair that he wald not be comforted.” He possessed in a very high degree all that charm of manner so characteristic of the Stuarts, which drew to him both young and old. At Newhaven we see James’s love for children shown in his interest in this little nameless lass, whose charm and grace of manner seem to have been no less attractive than his own, and whose little heart he was wont to make glad on his visits to his dockyards with the small money gift of a groat, perhaps to buy strawberries from one of those sunny gardens where they used to ripen so early, or, if autumn were the season, to purchase honey pears from the fruitseller at the pier end. What an interesting story of child life in the days when James IV. was king might be written round the title, “The Little Lass in Newhaven.”

During the years 1508–11 we know little of what went on in Newhaven, as the king’s accounts for those

years have not come down to us. The *Great Michael*, by far the largest ship built in Europe in those days, was still on the stocks. The best account we have of this great ship is from the pen of that picturesque old chronicler, Pitcottie, whose word-pictures are so often credited with owing much to the free play of his imagination.

According to Pitcottie, the *Great Michael* wasted all the woods of Fife except those of Falkland in addition to all the timber that was brought from Norway. Here Pitcottie must have put a great restraint upon his powers of story-telling, for when we examine the account books we find that he has understated, rather than exaggerated, the amount of timber used in her construction. Not only were supplies of timber sought in all parts of Scotland, but they were also largely imported from the Continent, and especially from France and the Baltic or "Estland Seys."

The dimensions of the *Great Michael*, as given by the same chronicler, were two hundred and forty feet long, thirty-five feet broad, with sides of oak ten feet thick. With such dimensions as these, it is not surprising that she wasted all the woods of Fife, and required in addition many cargoes of timber from Norway and other lands beyond the sea.

Besides the timber, much of the other material employed in the construction of this great ship also came from the Continent, and chiefly, of course, from those countries with which Leith was accustomed to trade most, such as the Low Countries, France, Scandinavia, Denmark, and Poland. We see the enmity between England and Scotland that did so much to hinder their mutual trade in olden times in the fact that tin and copper from Cornwall were got *via* Antwerp.

The guns came mostly from Flanders, though many were made in Edinburgh Castle and stored in the King's Wark on the Shore. Hundreds of "gun-stanes"—the general name for cannon balls at this time—were also imported from Flanders. With them came canvas for sails, and most of the ropes and cables, while much of the rigging also came from France—from Dieppe and Rouen. Pitch and tar, of which large quantities were required for the dockyards, were, like so much of the timber, brought from Denmark and other countries round the "Estland Seys."

For lighting purposes there also came from Flanders chandeliers—that is, candlesticks of a more or less ornamental kind—and horn for bowets to the ships. Bowets were lanterns in which horn was used instead of glass, a highly expensive material in the reign of James IV. The *Great Michael* had twenty-six bowets altogether—twenty-three small ones and three large, two of these latter for the stern and one for her bow. Then there were the "night-glasses," or sand-glasses, which in those clockless days were used to indicate the half-hours at sea as is still done by bells.

The compasses for the ship were also got from Flanders, and George Paterson, a member of a family of Leith mariners, was commissioned to choose them and bring them home with his ship from Middelburg. The skippers engaged in the work of importing these various stores were the Bartons, that fire-eater William Brownhill, John Lawson (the name-father to Lawson's Wynd), and Captain Lamb, of whose family we have already heard and of which we shall hear still more.

The *Great Michael* seems to have been launched in October 1511, but the event is nowhere definitely stated. So notable an incident, however, could not fail to be

celebrated as a gala day in Newhaven, and so we find payments being made to Scottish trumpeters "at the outputting of the kingis gret schip." James would



THE "GREAT MICHAEL."  
(From the model in the Royal Scottish Museum.)

be there and so would Queen Margaret, and with them a brilliant train of lords and ladies from Holyrood. Congratulations on the success of the day's event would be showered from all sides on Sir Andrew Wood and

Jacques Terrell, the master wright, who in those days was designer as well as builder.

When finally out of the builders' hands and furnished with her full equipment, she made a brave show as she rode at anchor some two miles from the shore, with her richly carved and decorated forecastle, her huge poop, her four great masts alive with banners and streamers, and her sails, as was the custom of the age, emblazoned with the royal and other coats-of-arms.

But even then she gave her commander, Sir Andrew Wood, and Jacques Terrell, the master wright, no end of trouble, for owing to her huge size and cumbersome build she was somewhat difficult to navigate. For this reason she had the misfortune to run aground in one of her early trips in the Firth, which had not then its shoals and shallows indicated by buoys as it has to-day. The result was that there were added to her crew three pilots, who, strangely enough, were all Frenchmen, and whose duty it was to mark out the deeper channels.

Now that the *Great Michael* was making such an imposing show as she lay at anchor in the Roads, and had no further need of his services aboard her in the meantime, Jacques Terrell sailed for France in February 1513 with the French ambassador, De la Motte. The master wright went to France to enlist fourscore French mariners, perhaps to act as gunners, for the *Great Michael*. He sailed from Newhaven in De la Motte's little bark called the *Gabriel*. As Will Brownhill, with three ships under his command, left Leith at the same time, ostensibly for Flanders to deceive the English spies, but really for France, he almost certainly joined De la Motte as convoy to his ship, the little *Gabriel*, which was freighted with wool fleeces and salted hides, two of Leith's staple articles of export.



Ambassadors in those days seemingly joined trade with diplomacy, and did not disdain to combine a little piracy with both when a successful opportunity came along. Like her more famous namesake in the old English ballad, the *Gabriel* sailed away adventurously to meet whatever fortune, chance, or Providence might send. Off Flamborough Head she fell in with an English ship making for Newcastle with a cargo of wine, which was promptly captured and sent on to Leith with a prize crew.

Now such an exploit was not the unaided work of the little *Gabriel*, and, as the prize was sent to Leith, we may conclude that Will Brownhill and his three ships had not been far off. To be sure Scotland and England chanced to be at peace at that particular time, but that counted for little on the high seas, where a state of war between the mariners of the two countries was the normal condition of affairs.

At this time, according to the letters of the English spies, James visited his ships at Newhaven daily, going early in the morning and remaining until the dinner-hour, which was then at twelve o'clock. How many ships had been built at Newhaven it is now impossible to say. In the letters of the spies of Henry VIII. we read of ships in course of building, but we have no clue to their names.

Just at this very time we have an account from the English ambassador himself of his visit to Leith and Newhaven. He was as much spy as envoy, which James, who perhaps suggested the visit, seemed to guess. James had boasted that the *Great Michael* carried more guns than the French king ever brought to the siege of a town. The English ambassador wrote to King Henry that this was "a great crack," or lie, but was too polite

to say so to James. He, however, went down to Leith to see the ships for himself, and then went on to Newhaven, but as some of the largest of the king's ships, unknown to this rather self-satisfied Englishman, were safely out of sight far beyond Queensferry, he sent a rather disparaging report of the size of James's navy to his lord and master in the belief that he had seen the whole of it.

Jealous for their port of Leith, the burgesses of Edinburgh, we are told, looked with no friendly eye upon the growing importance of Newhaven, for much injury was done to the royal burghs and their monopoly of the overseas trade by vessels sailing from such ports as Newhaven, over which they had no jurisdiction. In 1510, therefore, they purchased Newhaven from James, whose many expensive enterprises left him in constant need of money.

The charter granted to the city by the king describes Newhaven as "the new port called Newhaven, lately constructed by the king on the seashore between the Chapel of St. Nicholas in the north part of the town of Leith and the lands of Wardie." From this charter we further learn that Newhaven had at this time at least one street, the South Raw. While the burgesses of Edinburgh thus obtained complete control of Newhaven, they were at the same time bound to uphold the pier and bulwarks for receiving and protecting the ships and vessels sailing thereto.

This grant of Newhaven to the city of Edinburgh in no way interfered with its use as a place for the construction of the king's ships, but with the departure of James's fleet for France in 1513, the larger portion of which never returned, the great days of Newhaven as a shipbuilding port came to an end. The death of

James at Flodden, the misrule and lawlessness which followed, and the failure of Edinburgh to uphold the pier and bulwarks gradually led to its decline. No vestige of the pier and once busy dockyards erected by James IV. survives in Newhaven to-day.



NEWHAVEN HARBOUR,  
showing the Slip for the old Ferry Sloops, and, above it, the Pier  
for Steamboats.

## Chapter XIX.

### NEWHAVEN: A FISHING VILLAGE.

AT what period Newhaven became noted for its fisher population it would be difficult to say. A persistent tradition tells that the fisherfolk came from the Netherlands. We have already seen that a goodly number of the gunners and shipwrights introduced by James IV. in the earliest days of Newhaven's history came from both the Netherlands and the northern shores of France, especially from Normandy and Brittany. Hans, the king's master gunner, was a Fleming, while Jacques Terrell, who as James's master wright played so great a part in the building of his navy, was a Frenchman. That the original population of Newhaven had a considerable Flemish element is undoubtedly true, but the tradition that its fisherfolk are the descendants of Flemish refugees, who settled here during the life and death struggle of their nation against the might of Spain, we may at once set aside as mere legend.

Fish has always formed a large part of the food of the people of our district, and, down to the early days of the nineteenth century, was almost the only meat the poorer classes could afford. Newhaven was in early days, and still is, the chief source of this supply. For centuries then, before the days of railways, the fishwives

of Newhaven travelled to their Edinburgh customers by Whiting Loan (now Newhaven Road), through Broughton village (for Pilrig Street and Leith Walk are modern), and up Leith Wynd, where, after paying the petty customs on their fish, "new drawn frae the Forth," they entered the High Street by the Netherbow Port. For safety they always travelled in company in these law-



NEW LANE, NEWHAVEN.

less days, beguiling the long and toilsome journey by singing in chorus the songs their grandmothers had sung before them.

Accustomed to an outdoor life from their early years and in all weathers, the fisherwomen are well known for their strong and healthy figures. Yet even in our days of trains and trams their strength must often be sorely taxed as they bear their burden of fish up the steep streets, and still steeper stairs, for which Edinburgh is notorious. A fishwife's ordinary load varies from half



a hundredweight to a hundredweight, and, incredible as it may seem, heavier loads are sometimes carried. A well-known song by James Ballantine, an Edinburgh poet who might be called the children's laureate, takes its name and refrain from an incident that bears out what has been said about the heavy loads the Newhaven fishwife is often accustomed to carry. Ballantine happened to be passing when a fishwife was about to hoist on to her back her heavily laden creel. He very gallantly went to her assistance, and after doing so remarked with astonishment on the weight of her burden. Her cheery reply as she adjusted the strap against her forehead showed a happiness and contentment with her lot as unexpected as was the beauty and poetry of the words in which it was expressed—"Oo, ay, but ilka blade o' grass keps its ain drap o' dew."

But the Newhaven fishwife has other praiseworthy characteristics besides a happy contentment with her lot. As the creel becomes lighter, her industry and thrift are very much in evidence on her journeys, for she usually knits whenever her hands are free, and thus keeps herself and family well supplied with good warm stockings. As they ply their trade with creel on back, the fishwives of Newhaven are, from an historical point of view, the most picturesque figures met with in our streets. Not only are they the last of our old street traders, who formed such a prominent part of the street life in days gone by (as it is mirrored for us in the poems of Dunbar, Fergusson, and other Scottish poets, and in some of the novels of Sir Walter Scott), but they ply their trade to-day in almost the same garb, and in pretty much the same way, as they did centuries ago, when the Stuarts held court in Holyrood.

The fishwives of Newhaven are in our day the only

old-world figures still to be seen in our streets, and as such they form a link connecting us with the figures in the bustling crowds that thronged the thoroughfares of Edinburgh and Leith in far-off days. The dress of the fishwife is familiar to all. Henley, the poet, has described it in his sonnet entitled "At Fisherrow," and Charles Reade has given it several paragraphs in *Christie Johnstone*, his well-known novel on Newhaven fisher life of sixty years ago, named after its heroine, a Newhaven fisher lass. Charles Reade spent some weeks here in the autumn of 1852. His picture of Newhaven fisher-folk and their ways is hardly a true representation, and, like most English novelists, he is not very happy in his Scottish dialogue. The best thing in the book is the portrait it draws of Dr. Fairbairn, so long Free Church minister here, whose church Reade attended while residing in Newhaven. The great majority of the congregation were fishermen and their families, who were always keenly appreciative of the manner in which Dr. Fairbairn prayed for those exposed to "peril on the sea."

The Newhaven fishwife's dress is admirably adapted to her calling. Its most noticeable feature is the multiplicity of short petticoats, the home-knitted stockings, usually black, and the neat shoes. The numerous petticoats are a necessity of her vocation. Secured round her waist by broad bands, the bulging flannel forms a saddle for the creel, without which it would be equally difficult to balance and to carry, while their numerous folds form a protection both against wet weather and the drip of the creel.

To the lay mind all fishwives seem dressed alike, but there are several marked differences that distinguish those of Newhaven from those, say, of Fisherrow. The

Fisherrow fishwife has a greater length of skirt and her creel band is always of leather, while that of her Newhaven sister is usually of canvas, which is well scrubbed every week to match her usual trig appearance. The girls generally go bareheaded, and the married women often follow their example and have no other head-dress than their own abundant hair brushed close and smooth.



FOUR GENERATIONS, NEWHAVEN.

Frequently, however, the married women wear a frilled cap that seems to indicate that old connection with the fisherfolk of Flanders, Normandy, and the coasts of Brittany.

Such are the fishwives of whom, when driving through Newhaven in 1872, the late Queen Victoria saw "many very enthusiastic, but not in their smartest dress." In their smartest dress the Newhaven fisher girls are undoubtedly the golden butterflies of their kind. As

such they have been invited to concerts in many large English towns, and a dozen of them were sent as attendants to the great London Fisheries Exhibition of 1883, when they were hospitably entertained by Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle, and by the Prince and Princess of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra) at Marlborough House. As a result of this



BAITING THE LINE, NEWHAVEN.

visit the fisher girls' garb as a costume for ladies became fashionable all over the country, silks and finer cloths being substituted for the more common and more durable material. As we notice the brightness and colour added to our street scenes by the fisher girls of Newhaven when in gala dress we cannot but regret that so few of the old-time national costumes survive among us to-day.

Until recent years the inhabitants of Newhaven rarely married outside their own community. Their marriages have been aptly described as a union of talents as well as of hearts. A woman of any other class would be almost useless as a fisherman's wife, unacquainted as she would be with the baiting and the preparation of lines and the mending of nets, and unable to assist him in the maintenance of the family by donning the creel and disposing of his catch. Sir Walter Scott, who knew the Newhaven people and their sayings well, is referring to this in *The Antiquary* when he makes Steenie's mother, Maggie Mucklebackit, say to his sweetheart Jenny, "You'll no dae for Steenie, lass; a feckless thing like you's no fit to mainteen aman." The Newhaven fishwife is indeed the head of the household, ruling her husband along with the other members of the family, and believing with Maggie Mucklebackit that "Them that sell the goods guide the purse; them that guide the purse rule the house." And how well she guides the purse is borne out by the fact that Newhaven is reckoned to have the wealthiest fishing community on the Forth, many of the houses being owned by their thrifty occupants.

A wedding in Newhaven, until some thirty or more years ago, used to be a very notable event, and as most of the inhabitants were more or less known to each other, if not related, it was generally attended by a large number of the younger members of the community. The bride in her braws, accompanied by her sweetheart, went round some time before and invited the guests personally. On the wedding day they walked in couples from the bride's house to the "Peacock," the "Marine," or other hotel, where the marriage was to be celebrated.



“ And a’ the boats wi’ flags were decked,  
 Frae Annfield to the pier ;  
 And Doctor Johnstone, worthy man,  
 Had twa three hours to spare,  
 Sae he toddled to Newhaven,  
 And spliced the happy pair.”



THE OLD WILLOW TREE,  
 NOW REMOVED.  
 (Photo, "*Evening Dispatch*.")

As many as one hundred couples have "walked" at a Newhaven wedding, the male guests frequently, as in the old-time "penny weddings," paying their own and their partner's share of the wedding supper. Such weddings, like other old fisher customs, have gradually gone out of fashion, as the younger generation are no longer following the vocation of their parents, and the prophecy of the old spaewife anent the great willow tree that once grew and flourished at Willow Bank so many long years ago,

" When that tree shall decay,  
 The open sea-boat fishing trade shall also die away,"

seems fast coming true.

The young men are now either joining the trawlers or entering some trade, while the majority of the Newhaven girls will no longer carry the creel, and, discarding the picturesque fishing costume, follow other walks in life, many of them being employed in Messrs. Devlin's net factory at Granton and other public works in the

neighbourhood. Though such a sight was common a generation ago, it is only on rare occasions now that one sees fisherwomen baiting and preparing lines at their doorstep in Newhaven. The day of the small trader in the fishing industry, as in most others, is over, and thus the old-time fishing boats, with their tall, straight masts and brown sails, than which nothing could be more picturesque, are not so numerous in Newhaven harbour as they once were. The trawler has almost driven the line fisher from the fishing grounds, just as the fish shop, and more especially the fish cart, even in Newhaven itself, is driving the fishwife out of the market. The cry of "Caller herrin'" is seldom heard in our streets, and soon will be remembered only in the touching words of Lady Nairne's fine song, whose beautiful air was composed by Nathaniel Gow from a blending of the music of St. Andrew's church bells with the notes of a fishwife's cry, as she hawked her fish along George Street when that fine thoroughfare was a residential and not a business quarter as it is to-day.

From the gay and romantic times of James IV. down to the boyhood days of our grandfathers many fisherwomen earned their livelihood by the sale of shell-fish. The cries of "Cockles and mussels," "Wulks and buckies" are no longer heard. The vendors of these, however, now reduced to some half-dozen fisherwomen and girls, still remain, and form an interesting picture of Old Edinburgh street life. They are all, with the exception of one, who has her stance in Leith Street, to be found in the Old Town—in the High Street, Bristo, and St. Mary Street, and near the very spots occupied by their predecessors of four hundred years ago. These fisherfolk are usually to be found on Saturdays only, and all come from Fisherrow. No Newhaven fishwife

would now condescend to sell shellfish on the street, for by her it is no longer considered a fish trade of the first class.

In the evenings during the months of May, June, and July the Newhaven fisher girl, with creel on back and rather more trig in her get-up than usual, though not in her smartest dress, may be found at some busy centre such as the Theatre Royal or the foot of Leith Walk. Here towards sunset the cry of "Caller partans" may fall pleasantly on the ear. It is usually rendered "Caller parte-e-e," for the fisher lass seems to take pleasure in prolonging the last syllable to make her cry more effective, and to save herself its too frequent repetition.

The season of partans used to be followed by that of oysters.

"September's merry month is near  
That brings in Neptune's caller cheer,  
New oysters fresh;  
The halesomest and nicest gear  
O' fish or flesh."

During every month with the letter "r" in it—that is, from September to April—the cry of "Caller ou" (that is, Caller oysters), the most beautiful of all the fisherwomen's cries, was frequently heard on the streets after "the aucht hours' bell." Evening oyster parties were fashionable in old-time Edinburgh and Leith, and many a "snell repartee" used to be exchanged between the oyster lass and her customers. The supply of oysters in the Forth, from overdredging and other causes, is now extremely limited.

Oyster dredging employed the local fishermen from the close of the summer herring fishing off the north-

east coast until the opening of the winter herring fishing in the Forth, and the sale of oysters was a lucrative source of income to the fisherwomen. The Forth oyster beds are slowly recovering themselves, and the time may again come when the melodious cry of "Caller ow-oooh," as it was pronounced, which even yet is occasionally heard on autumn evenings in our West End squares, will once more become familiar to our ears, and the picturesque form of the Newhaven fisher girl, as in days gone by, be more frequently seen in our streets.

An important institution of Newhaven that was wont to bring itself more frequently into public notice than it does now is the Free Fishermen's Society, which is said to date from 1572. The annual election of the boxmaster of this society, until a very few years ago, gave Newhaven its annual gala night, when a great torchlight procession was formed for the "lifting of the box" and its conveyance to the house of the new boxmaster for the year. This event was followed by a supper noted for its flowing bowl. In more temperate days this supper became a soiree, when the Rev. Dr. Kilpatrick usually occupied the chair, and on these occasions was generally in his best story-telling form. The soiree, like the supper, is now among the things that were. The Society, for the nominal rent of ten shillings per annum, has perpetual lease from the Government of the Free Fishermen's Park, which is all that remains of the once extensive Newhaven Links.

We have now followed the outline of Newhaven's history from its earliest days to our own times. At first it seemed destined to become a great shipbuilding port, but the untoward death of James IV. on Flodden Edge ended those hopes, and it gradually declined into

the little fishing village it remained down to the close of the eighteenth century. After the Turnpike Road Act of 1751, which did so much for Scotland's progress, and the consequent great development of the stage coach, Newhaven became the busiest and most important ferry and packet station in Scotland; but its somewhat primitive pier and breakwater could not pos-



MAIN STREET, NEWHAVEN.

sibly hold out against the magnificent docks and piers which in 1848 drew the railway to Granton, and it sank once more into a fishing village as we know it to-day.

Once again, however, the stir and bustle of trade have invaded it, and, as a fishing village, it now seems about to regain the fame it has lost as a port. Yet, strange as it may seem, it is as the little fishing village



that Newhaven has achieved its greatest distinction, for, by sending its musical cries of "Caller herrin'" and "Caller ou" sounding over the globe, it has become known to fame wherever the English language is spoken and Scots songs are loved.



"NEW DRAWN FRAE THE FORTH."

## Chapter XX.

### LEITH IN LATER STUART TIMES.

WITH the accession of the haughty and imperious Henry VIII. to the English throne in 1509 the friendly relations which had existed between Scotland and England since the marriage of James IV. and Margaret Tudor soon became strained. The state of affairs on the Continent was partly to blame for this. There Pope Julius II. had formed the Holy League with Venice, Spain, the Emperor Maximilian, and Henry VIII. against France. James could hardly with honour to himself remain neutral when the ancient ally of Scotland was thus being attacked on all sides, more especially as he well knew—and the events of history were to justify his belief—that, if Henry succeeded in France, Scotland would be the next to suffer from his ambition.

And besides, James himself had several causes of quarrel with Henry, only one of which concerns our story of Leith. This was the attack by the Howards on Andrew Barton and his two ships in time of peace. It was just at this time that De la Motte, the French ambassador, arrived with his queen's appeal for help, bringing with him into Leith seven English ships captured at sea. Three months later Robert Barton brought in thirteen more. War inevitably followed. James determined to assist France by leading an army across

the Border and sending his now powerful fleet to co-operate with that of France against England in the Channel.

On the outbreak of war the command of the fleet, as we have seen, was not given to a real seaman like Sir Andrew Wood or Robert Barton, but to the Earl of Arran, for in feudal times the high officers of State were chosen from among the great nobles. Robert Barton sailed under Arran as captain of the *Lion*, while his brother John went as commander of the *Margaret*, but died on the voyage before the fleet reached France. The ships of the fleet were completely equipped in every way, their complement of men including chaplains and surgeons just as those of warships do to-day.

We can imagine the stir and excitement in Leith when the ships sailed away, since all the sailormen and gunners of Leith and Newhaven were aboard. So was King James, for to show his interest in the expedition he had resolved to sail in the *Great Michael* as far as the May Island. The children and the womenfolk, the old and the feeble, crowded the pier and the beach to watch the fleet as it sailed away, little dreaming that as the ships, their pride and their boast, one after another, disappeared beyond the horizon they had seen the most of them for the last time. On the king's return to Leith, Arran, instead of steering direct for France, for some unaccountable reason went North-about and arrived in France too late to have any influence on the war. From this date the navy of James IV., built at so great a cost and constructed almost entirely by the people of Leith and Newhaven, disappears from history, and seems to have been sold out of the service, for during the long and troubled minority of James V. little patriotism was left in the land.

Meanwhile the great army of James was gathering at the Standand Stane on the Burgh Muir, over which the streets and villas of Morningside are now built. This "standand stane" has been placed upon the wall enclosing the grounds of Morningside Parish Church, and is now known as the "Bore Stone." James and his army were no more successful than the fleet, for at Flodden they met with such disastrous defeat that the sorrow of it even yet echoes mournfully in song and story. Local tradition records how nobly the burgesses of Edinburgh fought and died around their king in the gloom of that fatal September evening on Flodden Edge, and how great was the sorrow the dark tidings of the disaster brought her.

But what of Leith? "Tradition, legend, tune, and song" record the part towns like Edinburgh, Selkirk, and Hawick played in this much-storied battle; but how many Leithers, if asked, could tell what share their town took in the Flodden campaign? And yet, when we turn to the accounts for the king's ships, the story of Leith's part is at once revealed. The men of Leith and Newhaven, as one might have guessed, were with the fleet; for their country has never called when they have not heard. Their very names are all set down, and run to hundreds. First on the list come the Bartons, of whom there were no fewer than seven, followed by their relations the Edmonstones and the Kers, who, with the Richardsons, lived in North Leith.

The tragic and untimely death of James IV. at Flodden was nowhere more lamented than in Leith, for in no part of the country had that gay and romantic monarch been better known and more loved. His interest in his ships and dockyards had brought him almost daily to the town, where he was a frequent and welcome visitor

at the homes of his more noted sea-captains, Sir Andrew Wood, the Bartons, the Logans, Will Merrymouth, and Will Brownhill. Never again was any king of Scotland to have such frequent and friendly association with Leith as James IV. had had. Under his wise and peaceful rule the town had grown and prospered, but its prominence in national affairs was not due to its size, which was small, but to its harbour, then the most important in the country, and to its sailormen, whose courage and daring were held in wholesome dread wherever their flag was known.

The truth of the chronicler Fordoun's almost prophetic utterance, "Woe to the land when the king is a child," was to be brought home to the people of Leith during the long minority of James V. in a way never before experienced even in unruly Scotland. The wayward Earl of Arran in the summer of 1513 returned with three ships of the fleet he had so leisurely led to France, two of them being the *Margaret* and the *James*. The *Great Michael* and the others were sold to the French king, and Leith saw them no more. The Leith sailormen on their return complained bitterly of their treatment at the hands of the French, who, no doubt, felt keenly the tardy arrival of Arran, for the war had gone against their king, Louis XII.

Arran became Provost of Edinburgh, and was at the same time head of the King's Council. In a dispute between the merchant burgesses of Edinburgh and the Leithers, led by Robert Barton, about the sale of a cargo of timber brought by a Dutch ship to the Shore, Arran, in an evil hour for himself, and to the towering wrath of the Edinburgh burgesses, sided with the Leithers, who, to say truth, had ignored any rights of the burgesses in the matter. The Edinburgh merchants, how-



ever, soon found occasion for revenge. In the great street fight between Arran and Angus and their followers, known to fame as "Cleanse the Causeway," the burghesses took the side of Angus, and Arran and his son only saved themselves by mounting a pack-horse that had come into the city with coals, and riding through the shallows of the Nor' Loch for their lives.

It was impossible that trade could flourish amid the lawlessness and consequent insecurity that ensued when rulers in the State like Angus and Arran led the way in stirring up turmoil and strife. It was decreed that no Hamilton or Douglas should occupy the provost's chair. Leith then, for the first and only time, supplied the city with her chief magistrate in the person of Robert Logan of Coatfield, who was granted 100 merks in addition to his ordinary fee, that he might employ four armed men to carry halberds before him, "because the world is brukle (unsettled) and troublous."

It was now that Henry VIII. began a policy of "frightfulness" against Scotland by raiding and desolating the Lowland districts. These English raids were usually preceded or accompanied by a naval force, which sometimes sailed up the Forth, destroying the shipping and harassing the towns round the coast. One of these naval raids now brings Leith into notice. On the first Sunday of May 1521 seven English warships made their way up the Firth, and attacked the Port when the people were about to set out for morning church. They bombarded the town, doing little harm, for they were on a lee and sandy shore and feared to venture too near, but thought that "such another peal to matins and to mass had not been rung in Leith these twenty years." Off Inchkeith, where they replenished their empty water barrels, they learned from a captain whose

ship they had captured that no vessels were then in the Port, save a barque of Davy Falconer's and a ship belonging to Hob à Barton. The others were all at sea, which was just as well perhaps for the English commander, for when Davy Falconer and young John Barton joined ships they could give the English long odds and win in the end.

Thus with the turmoil within the realm from feudal strife and English raids, and wars upon the sea, the shipping of Leith declined and trade decayed. An unemployment "dole" had to be paid to the clerk who gave the bailie's "tikket" allowing ships to set out on their voyage, and another was paid to the keeper of the Over Tron at the Bowhead, where all goods imported into Leith were weighed, for overseas trade had almost ceased. Save the *Unicorn*, we hear of no more ships being built. The dockyards of the Port and Newhaven became neglected, and finally fell into decay and ruin. Leith again had to revert to her former custom of purchasing what ships she required from Holland, and not till the beginning of the eighteenth century did the building of the larger ships again become an industry in the town. Much of her trade, as in older days, again fell into the hands of Dutch and Flemish shipowners, whose freights were lower even than those of her own shipmen.

In 1527 continental politics took a change. Henry VIII. was now in league with France against the Emperor Charles V., and Scotland, as her ally, was included in the peace. But war, both by land and sea, soon broke out again, and on the sea Leith was seldom out of the fray. Early in the following year five armed ships, with the king's knowledge we are told, set forth from Leith Haven. The capital "H" shows that Newhaven is meant. It

was there that the largest vessels usually lay at this time.

The names of the ships are not given, but those of some of the captains are, at whose sole expense they were equipped. There were Will Clapperton, who lived on the Shore; John Barton, who had all the fighting spirit of his more famous uncles, Andrew and Robert; and John Ker, who was married to Barton's sister Agnes, and lived benorth the brig—that is, in North Leith. Evidently they had some score to settle with the “auld enemy,” and they paid it with interest. For three months later they returned to Leith in triumph with fifteen English prizes to recoup them for their outlay. “Our Lord send amends of the false Scots,” wrote the exasperated English spy who had the unpleasant duty of sending this highly displeasing news of the exploits of John Barton and his friends to his English employers.

Certainly this English spy had good cause to feel sore, for a similar capture of English ships had been made the year before. “I would like to do the Scots some displeasure,” wrote the English Admiral of the Narrow Seas to Wolsey, “for their cracks and high words.” He was thinking of the Leith sailormen when he wrote, for some proud words of John Barton had just been reported to him by an English sea captain whom that bold Leith mariner had relieved of both ship and cargo the day before, within the very seas patrolled by the irate admiral's ships. It almost seems as if Leith had no need of shipbuilding yards in those stirring times.

Peace was at length proclaimed, and Henry, having sent his nephew James the Order of the Garter as a token of his goodwill, the latter thought he might safely leave his kingdom for a time and venture overseas to France,

where he was engaged by treaty to marry a French princess. It was not considered courtly etiquette for a king to go a-wooing in this way. James, no doubt, inherited this impulsive side of his nature from his Tudor mother, who, like her imperious brother Henry VIII., was constantly giving shocks to her more sedately-minded subjects. Yet, as Leithers, we are pleased that King James was no stickler for courtly convention, for his voyage in search of a wife with a rich "tocher" to replenish his empty treasury forms a pleasant and romantic episode in the almost unvarying story of piracy and war that seems to form the staple of Leith's history during this period.

James did not set sail from Leith as is so often stated, but the small fleet of seven ships did which was to carry him and his brilliant retinue to France. The names of two only of these ships are given—the *Mary Willoughby*, one of John Barton's captures from the English and the largest ship then belonging to the Port, and the *Morisat*, whose name suggests that she was one of the many captures by the Bartons from the Portugals. The fleet picked up the king and his suite at Pittenweem, for they had all travelled thither from his favourite seat of Falkland. In addition to their crews the vessels carried five hundred soldiers, so that, in the event of attack from English or other ships, the king might have a sufficient force with which to oppose them.

In those days books were few, and James, unlike his father, took no pleasure in them. Raleigh had not yet introduced tobacco, indeed was not yet born, so, to relieve the monotony of the voyage, whose length might vary from a few days to as many weeks or even months, according to the wind, James took with him for his own use two and a half barrels of sweetmeats

and a box of caramels. The storm-tossed fleet eventually reached Dieppe, to the great alarm of the inhabitants of that quaint old port, for they took the Scottish ships for some vengeful English squadron, until the red lion of Scotland pierced with the French fleurs-de-lis, which seafaring Dieppe knew so well, was seen at their masthead, when "thai war werie rejoyssit of his coming."

The lady chosen for him not coming up to James's expectations, he fell in love with the beautiful Madeleine, daughter of the French king, and she with him. The royal lovers were married with all pomp and ceremony at Notre Dame, in Paris, in 1537. James and his beautiful but delicate bride set sail from Dieppe with a fleet of fourteen Scottish ships convoyed by eight French men-of-war, but not before the English shore had been well reconnoitred to see if any English ships were ready to dispute their passage, for this French match must have been a sore trial to Henry VIII. At last, after a somewhat stormy voyage, the fleet made the sheltered waters of the Forth, and came to anchor off the harbour mouth at ten o'clock on Whitsunday evening.

Next morning Leith was all astir. In the long twilight of the previous evening the townsfolk had watched the fleet as it made its way up the Firth, and all had recognized the *Mary Willoughby* as she proudly led the way, her tops and yards alive with banners and streamers from mast to sea. When the queen stepped ashore she knelt down in the fullness of her loving heart, and kissed "the Scottis eard, and thanked God that her husband and she were cum saif through the seas," little dreaming as she did so that ere six weeks were to pass she would be laid to rest in Holyrood Abbey beneath the same kindly Scottish earth.

Expectant crowds lined the way as the king and his



young and happy bride, followed by a brilliant train of lords and ladies, rode along the Shore under a veritable canopy of streamers from the ships lining the quay wall. The hearts of all, men, women, and children, were at once captivated by the charm and sweetness of the fair and gentle Madeleine. But soon all this joy was changed to sorrow, for the excitement of her arrival and the sudden change from the genial and sunny climate of France to the cold east winds and chilly haars for which Leith and Edinburgh in May and June are notorious were too much for this fragile lily of France. To the inexpressible grief of the whole nation the loving and affectionate Madeleine died in the midst of her happiness a few weeks after her arrival on the Shore of Leith.

James was not a widower long, for in the following year he married Mary of Guise, whom he had much admired while in France the year before. Like Queen Madeleine, Mary of Guise voyaged to Scotland in John Barton's ship, the *Mary Willoughby*, but, as Leith was threatened with plague, she landed near Crail, where James met her. The marriage took place next day in St. Andrews Cathedral. Though Mary of Guise did not land at Leith she was destined ere long to form very close associations with the town, where memorials of her are still to be found. One of these, now in the Trinity House, is the model of a French galley named *La Belle Esperance*, in which she is said to have sailed to Scotland. Three galleons of France accompanied her on that occasion, but only one, the *Riall*, which had also convoyed Queen Madeleine, is named.

The marriage of James V. with Mary of Guise was to prove a turning-point in the history of Scotland and to bring much woe to Leith. James, encouraged by his French wife, turned more and more to France, while

a powerful section of the nobles, whose ranks were honey-combed with treachery, favoured closer relations with England. The result of these diverging policies was the shameful rout of Solway Moss, the death of James, and the poor defence against England in her savage wars against Scotland during the early years of Mary



"LA BELLE ESPERANCE."

*(From the model in the Trinity House.)*

Queen of Scots, when Leith more than once was most cruelly ravaged by the "auld enemy." Peace followed on the death of James, and a marriage was arranged between Henry's son, Edward, and the infant Queen of Scots, but the mischievous interference of Henry spoiled all.

In his customary high-handed way in dealing with

Scotland Henry ordered the seizure of several ships belonging to Leith and Edinburgh merchants and ship-owners. They were on their way to France laden with fish, and relying on the protection afforded by the peace had entered English ports under stress of weather. Negotiations were begun with a view to having the ships and their cargoes restored, but the English conditions were such that the patriotic Edinburgh and Leith ship-owners and merchants boldly declared they would rather lose their ships than become traitors to their country by agreeing to them. The Scots thereupon repudiated the marriage treaty, and began to establish closer relations with France.

Henry VIII. was furious at what he called the "untrue dealing" of the Scots, and reverted to the policy of "frightfulness" to bend them to his will. He had gathered together a great fleet of ships for service against France. He now ordered the veteran Earl of Hertford to employ these vessels in conveying an expedition to Scotland by sea, so as to avoid any chance of being intercepted and opposed on the Border.

Hertford's instructions were to burn Edinburgh, and so deface it as to leave a memory for ever of the vengeance of God upon it; to sack Holyrood; to sack, burn, and destroy Leith, and all the towns and villages round Edinburgh, "putting man, woman, and child to the sword without exception where any resistance is made." Such were Henry's savage and barbarous instructions, and in Hertford and his men, to whom mercy was unknown, he had fitting instruments for carrying them out.

## Chapter XXI.

### THE BURNING OF LEITH.

HERTFORD arrived in the Forth on his errand of destruction on the afternoon of Saturday, May 4, 1544. The Regent Arran (son to him who led James IV.'s navy to France) and Cardinal Beaton had got wind of the expedition a few days before, but too late to muster forces for effective resistance, and they made little or no use of those they had. They, however, warned all the inhabitants of the towns on the south shore of the Forth to fortify their towns with trenches to resist "the Englishe mennis navye," which those of Leith did. The people of Edinburgh and Leith gathered at every point of vantage to gaze on the great fleet of two hundred ships as they sailed up the Firth and came to anchor above Inchkeith.

Next morning the English army disembarked on the shore under the shadow of Wardie Tower, which had been built in the year 1500 by the Laird of Inverleith to defend his lands against the English; but on this occasion, like the Scottish leaders, Wardie Tower did nothing to oppose the enemy's landing. The English then marched in three divisions to the Water of Leith, near Bonnington Mill, where their passage was disputed by some Scottish troops under Arran and Beaton. The Scots made but a feeble resistance, however, and were

easily repulsed. Crossing the stream, the English then turned their steps towards Leith, whose early capture was necessary that they might bring their ships into its harbour for the landing of guns and stores. They were already bringing their larger ships into Newhaven.

John Knox, who was much given to the use of exaggerated language, gives a graphic picture of the English entry into Leith that suggests a sudden surprise and flight. According to Knox the English marched into the town, where they found "the tables covered, the dennarts prepared," and such abundance of wine and victuals as one could not find in any other town of the same size either in Scotland or England. Now it is hardly likely that the Leithers would prepare their Sunday dinners with the English marching towards their gates. In reality, save the defenders, all the inhabitants had fled from the town before the English arrived. But these same defenders did not allow the enemy the easy walk-over Knox would lead us to suppose. "We captured then by force," reports Hertford to his much gratified master, "the entry to the town of Leith, which was stoutly defended."

The crowd of fugitives, the stronger helping the more feeble and the sick, would make their way as best they could to the wilderness of swamp and morass that, for the greater part of the way, then extended between Duddingston and Gogar, where none could find them save those who knew the straggling and perilous paths by which their retreats alone could be reached. English invasion had made the folk of Leith familiar with these treacherous wastes, where they could remain in comparative safety until the enemy had taken their departure. From the large amount of plunder the English carried away from the town it is evident the



Leithers had fled in haste, and had had no time to take with them more than some oatmeal, perhaps, and a few cooking utensils.

The English found two goodly ships in the harbour—the *Salamander*, given to James V. by the French king on his marriage with the ill-fated Madeleine, and the *Unicorn*, which had been built in Leith or Newhaven. Whether the English found in the town all the sumptuous fare Knox pictures for us Hertford does not say, but that they captured a wealth of booty they had never anticipated is certain. “The town was found fuller of riches than we expected any Scottish town to have been,” reported the English admiral. In fact, the enemy captured booty in Leith to the value of £100,000 of our money—an amount of wealth that seems to contradict much of what we are generally told of Scotland’s poverty in those troublous times.

During the whole week they were encamped in Leith the English gave themselves up to the work of destruction. Edinburgh was given over to the torch. For three days and nights it blazed, and, being a city set on a hill, its burning was an awesome sight to behold. Holyrood, too, went up in flames; and with it was destroyed Restalrig and its tower above the loch, Pilrig, Newhaven, and the tower of the Laird of Inverleith on Wardie brow. Not a village in the neighbourhood, not a farm steading, not even a cottage was left unscathed. Meanwhile the English fleet had not been idle, for not a harbour, not a ship, not even a boat was left undestroyed on either side of the Firth from Stirling to the ocean.

The invaders now prepared to evacuate Leith, but before doing so they indulged in the same wanton destruction that had characterized their whole invasion.

They broke down the pier of Leith and burnt every stick of it. They took away the two goodly ships, the *Salamander* and the *Unicorn*, ballasting them with cannon shot from the King's Wark. They then sent away their ships not merely laden but, to use their own expression, cumbered with booty, and resolved to return homewards themselves by land. The night before their departure from Leith they held a grand carnival of destruction by burning every house in the town. Next morning they set off across the Links on their homeward march, passing Restalrig, now a blackened ruin, and then marched away eastwards by the Fishwives' Causeway, leaving a line of smoking towns, villages, and farms to mark their route.

Such were some of the things Leith saw and suffered in those old unhappy days. We can only partly realize the grief and terror of the townsfolk as they sought refuge from the cruelties and outrages of Hertford's savage soldiery amid the wastes and recesses around Arthur's Seat and the country farther west. Their suffering and misery are to a certain extent suggested to us in that dispatch of Hertford's detailing his fell work, which proved such pleasant reading to Henry VIII. In this document Hertford tells us how, standing with his officers upon the Calton Hill to view the burning city, he heard the women and children in the valley beyond, as they witnessed the destruction of their homes, bewailing their woeful state. On the departure of the invader those from Leith stole back again to the ruined town. Until their houses were repaired they found shelter in St. Mary's Church, which, strangely enough, had escaped the flames.

The Leith sailormen knew all along of the mighty fleet Hertford was assembling in the Tyne, and, guessing

its purpose, had discreetly kept themselves and their ships out of harm's way. They now returned, however, and determined that England should pay towards repairing the great loss the Port had sustained at her hands. Hertford's fleet had now sailed to the Channel, where it was sorely needed for service against France, and was not likely to return until peace was made. Led by John Barton with the *Mary Willoughby*, the *Lion*, and other ships, the Leith mariners hung along the English coast for the next four or five months and worked their will upon the English, Dutch, and Flemish shipping—for the latter countries, under the rule of Mary of Hungary, were for the time being Henry's allies against France. The Leith seamen during the war were thus shut out from trading with the Netherlands, and were now voyaging to Hamburg and other Hansard ports instead. "It would be an easy thing to lighten them by the way, either going or coming," wrote one of Henry's numerous spies; but the English king had his hands full in France, and so the Leithers, for the time at least, had command of the North Sea.

Newcastle was sorely stricken with plague, and could send neither ship, boat, nor mariner to oppose the Leithers. Hull, Yarmouth, and other east coast ports sent urgent appeals to Henry. "If we might have help here," they lamented, "the Scots should not long keep the seas. No man that sails by the coast can escape them, for they cannot be meddled with." Their only consolation was a message to help themselves as the Channel ports did. But their desire for revenge made those east coast towns importunate, and so another appeal was made to their sovereign lord. "They are desperate merchants of Leith and Edinburgh, who, having lost almost their whole substance at the army's late

being in Scotland, seek adventures to recover something. They have taken many Hollanders, and with such as they take of ours wax wealthy again. Six of your Majesty's ships are a match for sixteen of them. Sorry are we that they route after this sort upon the seas." But his Majesty told his loving subjects that if the Scots could be so easily beaten that was all the more reason why they should attempt it themselves. And so the "desperate Leith and Edinburgh merchants" continued to "route" upon the English seas because no mariner of the "auld enemy" dared say them nay.

Henry VIII. died early in 1547; but his death brought no change in the English policy towards Scotland, except for the worse, if that were possible, for Hertford, now Duke of Somerset, in his endeavours to compel the Scots to marry their little Queen Mary to Edward VI., surpassed even Henry VIII. in merciless and savage cruelty, as Leith was soon to know. He invaded Scotland once more, this time by land. The bale-fires blazed forth the news of his having crossed the Border. At Pinkie, near Musselburgh, he inflicted on the Scots army under Arran such an overwhelming defeat that for long years after the name of Black Saturday, given to the anniversary of the fight, reminded Scotland of one of the most disastrous days in her annals.

The craftsmen and merchant burgesses of Edinburgh, "the sons of heroes slain at Flodden," had again nobly come forward in defence of queen and country, and nearly four hundred widows were left to mourn their husbands sent to their long last home at Pinkie Cleuch. There, too, fell Robert Monypenny, the Laird of Pilrig; but who else from Leith, save the Laird of Restalrig, took part with Monypenny in this most disastrous fight we cannot tell. Luckily for the Leith sailormen,

they had set out on the autumn voyaging before the invasion took place, for Somerset was accompanied by a fleet of transports and war vessels that came to anchor off the mouth of the harbour.

The day after the battle the English marched straight along the shore to Leith, "the which we found all desolate, for not a soul did we find in the town." The Leithers, like the other inhabitants of the district, had been ordered to betake themselves and their gear within the shelter of the walls of Edinburgh. If the English had anticipated again enriching themselves with stores of loot from Leith they were to be hugely disappointed. Except some thirteen odd vessels, most of which were old and ruinous, there was little else to be found, "for as much of other things as could well be carried the inhabitants overnight had carried off with them," writes one who accompanied the expedition. What a strange procession they must have formed—the men, women, and children of Leith—as they toiled towards Edinburgh, bent and perspiring under their load of household gear. "My Lord Somerset and most of our horsemen were lodged in the town," while the rest of the army, in full view of their fleet riding at anchor in the Roads, lay encamped on the Links and on the stubble fields stretching away towards Lochend and Holyrood.

The English lay around Leith for a week. They struck their camp on the following Saturday, but Somerset, "mynding before with recompence sumwhat to reward one Barton, that had plaid an untrue part, commanded that overnight his house should be set afyr." This was John Barton, whom we have already seen achieving so much fame with his ships, the *Lion* and the *Mary Willoughby*. His "untrue part" was that he had been devotedly loyal in serving his country, as all



the Leith sailormen were in those days, when the shiftiness and double-dealing of the nobles who favoured the English cause had made the name of Scot a byword in England.

We do not know where John Barton's house was situated in Leith. As he was now the chief member of his family residing in the town, he had in all likelihood



SHERIFF BRAE.

(Lawson's Wynd enters at the low gable on the left.)

heired that of his grandfather, who had built his house in the Sheriff Brae, close by the residence of his old friend and fellow mariner, John Lawson of Lawson's Wynd, which was almost opposite the Old Brigend. In setting the torch to Barton's house the English soldiers, in their mischievous zeal, fired all the town besides. "Six great ships lying in the haven there," says the chronicler who accompanied the army, "that

for age and decay were not so apt for use, were then also set on fire, which all the night with great flame did burn very solemnly." Leaving the ships and the town in flames behind them, the English left Leith early next morning. The Castle gave them a few parting shots as they crossed the Links towards Lochend and Restalrig on their way to the Border. The English fleet continued in the Roads for some time longer, to complete their work of destroying the harbours and shipping along the coast. Then, leaving garrisons behind them on Inchkeith and Inchcolm, the English ships sailed away to the south.

Hertford gained nothing by the slaughter of Pinkie and outrages like the burnings of Leith, for the little Queen Mary was sent to France, where she eventually married the Dauphin, who became king as Francis II. Leith suffered as she did because Scotland was divided into factions, and thus no effective resistance could be made against the enemy. There were two great parties—the party favourable to France, which included the great mass of the people, and held strongly to the Catholic Church; and the party desirous of closer relations with England, and which, as England was now a Protestant country, became more and more identified with the doctrines of the Reformation.

But as yet those who favoured Protestantism in Scotland ran great risk of persecution and even death. Leith was not only destined to be the scene of the final triumph of the Reformers over their opponents, but was also to aid largely in spreading the new doctrines that were to overthrow the ancient Church. The converts to the new teaching were at first known in Scotland as Lutherans. Leith sailormen and Edinburgh merchants sailing to the Baltic ports, and especially to Danzig,

an early centre of the Lutheran Church, were among the first to become familiar with its teaching. It was chiefly through the traders of Leith and St. Andrews that Luther's books and copies of Tyndale's New Testament, carefully concealed in bales of merchandise, were imported into Scotland in spite of all the prohibitions against them. In this way Leith and Edinburgh made early acquaintance with Protestant doctrines.

The spread of the new teaching among the seafaring folk of Leith is shown in 1534, the year when David Straitoun and Norman Gourlay were executed as heretics at the Cross of Greenside, opposite Picardy Place. In that year Adam Deas, shipwright in North Leith, and Henry Cairns, a skipper, are cited to appear before the Archbishop of St. Andrews. What became of Deas does not appear, but Henry Cairns prudently went off to sea, and was denounced as fugitive and heretic with blast of trumpet on the Shore, the chief place of public resort both for townsmen and foreign traders, who would carry the news overseas.

The most noted sufferer for the Protestant faith having association with Leith at this time was the celebrated George Wishart, the most powerful and eloquent preacher of his day. On a Sunday in the middle of December 1545 he preached in Leith on the Parable of the Sower. No memory of Wishart's friends, or of their place of abode, has survived in Leith, but this gathering of sympathizers, so desirous to hear him discourse to them, and their assurance that nothing was to be feared from the inhabitants, suggest that the new religion had numerous supporters in the town.

Every year, as June and July came round, companies of pilgrims had for long centuries been accustomed to embark at the Shore to voyage by way of Bruges to the

shrine of that most popular of saints in Western Europe, St. James of Compostella, in Spain, and to return in September with their clam shells in token of their pilgrimage. Of these pilgrimages there is still a memorial over the doorway numbered 150 High Street, Edinburgh, marking where once stood the Clam Shell Turnpike. But now men like Patrick Hamilton, the first Scottish martyr, whose father had been Provost of Edinburgh in 1515, began to voyage to Danzig and other Baltic ports to see and hear Martin Luther at Wittenberg.

The Old Brigend was left in ruins by Hertford's troops after their victory at Pinkie. With that woeful battle may be associated the weird story of Bessie Dunlop, who met the ghost of Tom Reid, slain in Pinkie fight, by the waters of Lochend. Tom's ghost conferred upon Bessie the magic power which brought her to the stake as a witch in 1576. During Bessie's uncanny interview a great cavalcade of the fairies swept past, with loud jingle of bridle bells. They seemed to ride into the loch and so disappear.



THE OLD BRIGEND.

## Chapter XXII.

### THE SIEGE OF LEITH.

DURING the regency of Mary of Guise, the queen-mother, the differences between the two factions in Scotland became more acute, and a great struggle began as to whether the country was to become Protestant or to remain Catholic. That struggle was to be fought out in Leith. After the Battle of Pinkie, Somerset had left several strong English garrisons in Scotland, one of which occupied Inchkeith and constantly menaced the shipping of the Port. To help in driving out these garrisons some thousands of French troops had landed in Leith, which became their headquarters. These French troops, who brought with them their wives and children, were to play a great part in the fight between the Reformers and those who adhered to the old faith.

The French commander, Monsieur D'Essé, soon perceived the strategic importance of Leith, if fortified, as a stronghold and seaport. It would at once form a safe retreat should he chance to be defeated by the English, and at the same time be a gateway by which he could keep up communication with France, on which country he was to a large extent dependent for supplies. He therefore at once set about its fortification. Under his skilled direction the town was speedily enclosed within strong walls, constructed in accordance with the





most approved principles of military science then practised on the Continent. Indeed so skilfully had the French constructed their defensive works that they baffled every attempt of the Scots, aided by the English, to carry them by assault.

A large and strong bastion, which bore the name of Ramsay's Fort, was built immediately north of the King's Wark. A similar and equally strong bastion was erected on the opposite side of the river. These two works formed an adequate defence for the harbour against attack from the sea. Ramsay's Fort and its companion bastion on the north side of the water were built entirely of stone and were heavily armed with guns, whereas the rampart with which D'Essé enclosed the town was constructed mostly of earth, where shot from an enemy's guns would simply find a grave in which to bury themselves. No vestiges of D'Essé's fortifications or of those which succeeded them in Covenanting times remain to-day. Their memory, however, is still preserved in the name of Sandport Street, which was so called because a port or gate in the rampart there led out on to the Short Sands, where the Custom House now is. The last portion, removed on the construction of the lower and earlier part of Constitution Street and the erection of the Assembly Rooms, was known as the Ladies' Walk, from its having been a favourite promenade of the Leith belles because of its fine seaward views.

Inchkeith was still occupied by its English garrison. Whoever held Inchkeith possessed the key to the Forth in those days as in ours. From that important strategic position, therefore, the French in Leith now determined to drive the English out, for not only did they persistently plunder the neighbouring shores with such vessels as they had, but they were constantly attacking the ship-

ping passing up and down the Firth. Luckily, however, their powers of mischief had its limits. They lamented they had no "tall" ships, meaning ships of war. "Had I a ship like the *Mary Willoughby*," wrote the English commander to Somerset, "I would employ her well. The prizes I have lost would have paid all the charges of our men here." A ship with Flanders wares, one of the Old Leith "Wha daur meddle wi' me?" type that cared naught for the English garrison on Inchkeith, had just sailed into the harbour under his very nose, but her whole appearance forbade attack, and hence his laments to Somerset. Mary of Guise had been a frequent visitor to Leith since the arrival of her countrymen in the town. She took so much interest in the expedition against Inchkeith that she came down to the Shore to see it embark, and with the fair ladies of her Court waved her encouragement and wished them a pleasant trip on the Forth as they set out on their venture. After a prolonged and fierce fight the English commander was slain, when the garrison surrendered and the expedition returned in triumph to the harbour.

By the Treaty of Boulogne in 1550 war between England and France came to an end, and Scotland was included in the peace. Such English garrisons as still remained in Scotland now withdrew to their own country, but the French refused to return overseas. It now seemed as if Scotland had exchanged the domination of England for that of France, and would eventually become a mere French province. This feeling was intensified when Queen Mary was married to Francis II. in 1558. The French had long outstayed their welcome. The country was drawing more and more to the side of the Reformers, who had repeatedly demanded from the queen-regent that her countrymen should depart "furth

the kingdom." This she refused, and both sides then prepared to settle the dispute by force of arms.

As the Governor of Edinburgh Castle refused to have any dealings either with Mary of Guise and the French, or with the Lords of the Congregation, as the Protestant leaders were now called, the queen-regent, feeling herself unsafe in Holyrood, sought protection with the French garrison behind the strong defences of Leith. Here she built for herself a mansion in the Rotten Row which stood between Quality Lane and the modern Mary of Guise Buildings. This once royal mansion was demolished in the early eighteenth century, while an immediately adjacent building of the same period long known as "Mary of Guise House," which may, indeed, have been part of the queen-regent's residence, was removed in 1878.

Some interesting relics of these buildings have been preserved. One is a beautifully carved stone, having the Guise arms quartered with those of Scotland, which once adorned the front of Mary of Guise's house and is now built into the vestibule of South Leith Church. Two others, a finely carved oak door and a window frame, are in the safe keeping of the Antiquarian Museum in Edinburgh. Unfortunately only the lower part of the window frame has been preserved. It differs from those now in use in having wooden panels instead of glass in the lower sash, as all windows in Leith and Edinburgh, even those of Holyrood Palace, had down to the middle of the seventeenth century, when glass was less plentiful than now because much more expensive. Such a window may still be seen in Bailie Macmorran's house in Riddle's Close, Lawnmarket.

The door giving entry to Mary of Guise's house had neither bell nor knocker, but was provided with a pin



DOORWAY FROM MARY OF GUISE HOUSE, WATER STREET.

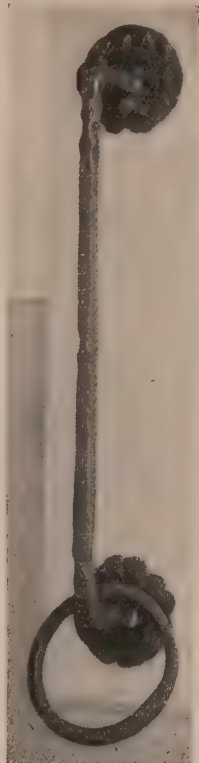


or risp, of which a picture of one from an old house in Leith is given below. No hero in the old ballads ever came to his lady love's door but he "tirl'd at the pin." Tirling pins are still commemorated in the old rhyme,

"Tirl the pin, peep in,  
Lift the latch, and walk in."

There is a tirling pin on the kitchen door of Pilrig House, and one has been placed on the door of the Cannon-ball House, on the Castle Hill.

With the queen-regent in Leith were few Scots of note save the far-seeing Maitland of Lethington, who before long deserted her to join the Reformers, and the wayward and unstable Sir Robert Logan of Restalrig. The great majority had joined the Lords of the Congregation, who sent a messenger to Leith to summon the town by sound of trumpet to surrender within the space of twelve hours. The trumpeter's blast, of course, was ignored, and war then began in earnest. The French troops in Leith numbered just over three thousand men, but they were all trained veterans who had seen much service in continental wars. Moreover, they were admirably led, for their commander, Monsieur D'Oysel, was a man of the greatest courage, and skilled in the art of war. He felt himself more than a match for the leaders of the Congregation and their undisciplined and



TIRLING PIN FROM AN  
OLD HOUSE IN QUEEN  
STREET.

untrained troops. The latter had no artillery worth the name, and that fact made it impossible for them to conduct a siege with any hope of success.

After several petty skirmishes had taken place in which the French were invariably the victors, the leaders of the Congregation resolved to carry the town by assault, and marched against it with a force of twelve thousand men. Scaling ladders for mounting the walls had been prepared in St. Giles' Church, which led the more strictly religious to predict that nothing but evil would follow such unholy doings. Their fears proved true. The ladders were found to be much too short; and the French making a sudden sally, the besiegers fled back to the city in the greatest disorder. The Protestant leaders having no money wherewith to pay their men were reduced to coining their "cupboard" plate, but before this could be done many of their men had deserted. The French in Leith, hearing of this further misfortune, sallied out from the town, attacked and silenced a battery of guns on the Calton Hill, and chased the panic-stricken enemy even into the city itself, where they made such a fray that all was disorder and uproar for two hours. They then returned in triumph to Leith laden with plunder, and were joyfully received by the queen-regent, who had seated herself upon the ramparts to welcome their victorious return.

Misfortunes, according to the proverb, never come singly. Nothing at this time seemed to escape the vigilance of the French. A convoy of provisions was to come to Edinburgh by the coast road from Musselburgh in the grey light of early morning. Now, as the long-expected French ships with supplies had not yet arrived in Leith, indeed were never to arrive, there was nothing the poor Leithers and the French stood more

in need of than provisions. "Soldiers," exclaimed D'Oysel, addressing his hungry troops, "we can have ample supplies of food and drink if we have but the courage to take them." This was welcome news, and the French troops were at once eager for the venture. D'Oysel embarked a chosen body of his men in boats, to escape detection, and sent them along the coast to lie in ambush at a point on the Figgate Whins, near Restalrig, where the convoy must pass. The troops sent to protect the provisions were unexpectedly set upon and driven in headlong flight into the city, while the convoy was compelled to change its course for Leith.

The poor Leithers must have had a sorry time with over three thousand French troops billeted on them. These occupied the best rooms in their houses and had the first share of any food that was going. But the Leithers were to have a sorrier time before the siege was over, for it was as yet not well begun. Fortune was to prove unkind to the brave and chivalrous D'Oysel. Queen Elizabeth made a treaty, the Treaty of Berwick, with the leaders of the Congregation, by which she agreed to help them with men, money, and a fleet to drive out the French and to establish Protestantism in Scotland.

In accordance with the terms of this treaty an English fleet under Admiral Winter arrived in the Forth. It had been delayed by storms, but the same storm that had detained Winter's ships had also driven a French fleet on its way to Leith to ruin on the Danish coast. Two of these French ships, however, richly laden with much-needed stores, eluded the English vessels and came to anchor off the mouth of the harbour under the protection of the French guns. But misfortune was yet to overtake them, for while their officers, in

the belief that their ships were perfectly safe, were supping with the queen-regent, a Leith sailorman, Andrew Sandes by name and one of a family of noted Leith mariners, with some kindred spirits, all apparently of Protestant leanings and all in league with the English admiral, stealthily rowed out to the Roads in the darkness of the winter night, boarded the two French ships, and, after a sharp conflict, carried them off to the English fleet.

Two months after Elizabeth's fleet had begun to blockade Leith from the sea, Lord Grey and the English army joined the Scots in enclosing it on the land side. The English commander made himself comfortable in the deanery at Restalrig while his men lay encamped between that village and the Links. Whether Scotland was to remain Catholic or become Protestant was to depend upon the fate of Leith. The English troops had scarcely arrived, when the French, undeterred by their superior numbers, sallied out from Leith, and, crossing the Links, took possession of the heights of Hawkhill, where a fierce but unequal contest raged for several hours. The French were at last forced to retreat, and withdrew behind their ramparts.

The English siege trenches gradually drew closer to the town. The French, to retard the progress of the works, made frequent sorties and did as much damage as they could before they again retired. In this way many a fierce and hotly contested skirmish took place on the Links midway between the two hostile camps. But such desultory fighting did not bring the capture of the town and the expulsion of the French any nearer. Accordingly, the English abandoned their position on the Hawkhill and erected two huge mounds on the Links on which to mount their guns. These two mounds—

Mount Pelham, now Lady Fife's Brae, after the Countess of Fife, whose mansion of Hermitage House stood close by, and Mount Somerset, so well known to-day as the Giant's Brae—were named after their respective captains of artillery. The English raised a third—Mount Falcon—in the neighbourhood of Bowling Green Street, and then, in conjunction with the fleet, began a fierce bombardment of the town. The steeple of St. An-



LADY FIFE'S BRAE, WELL, AND HOUSE.

thony's Hospital Church was shot down, and so were the choir and tower of St. Mary's, for they stood directly in the line of fire from Mount Somerset. The guns of Mount Falcon swept the Shore from end to end, so that to pass that way was to run the risk of almost certain death.

The bombardment went on for several weeks, yet the French showed no sign of surrender, nor had any breach been made in the walls. Many of the inhabitants were killed, and although the ramparts remained un-



breached, much damage was done in the town. One night in April 1560, just after supper, a great fire broke out in the neighbourhood of the Sheriff Brae, and raged among the timber-fronted houses throughout the whole night. The glare of the fire was seen for miles around, and the English prevented any attempt of the townsfolk to extinguish it by pouring upon the spot an incessant fusilade from their guns. Mary of Guise watched the progress of the fire from the Castle ramparts. To her laments over this misfortune to her loyal Frenchmen the unfeeling Governor rudely replied, "Indeed, madam, since it seems beyond the power of man to drive out the beggarly French, God Himself is taking the matter in hand."

The blockade now began to tell upon the besieged, who suffered much from famine, and were reduced to consuming horse flesh and the bodies of animals of a much less wholesome kind. But the French were evidently great sports, for they were in no way downhearted, and fought none the less gallantly in spite of the strange meats on which they fed. They were wont to rag the English by politely asking them from the ramparts how they were progressing with the siege of Restalrig. Queen Elizabeth, too, and her ministers, seeing little or no result for their large outlay, although the siege had lasted for months, began to hint that Lord Grey must be finding the deanery at Restalrig "a very sweet lodging." It was certainly exasperating to be paying £20,000 a month in what seemed a vain endeavour to drive out a few thousand ragged and half-starved Frenchmen.

Provoked by the stubborn defence and the jibes of the Frenchmen, not to speak of the whispers from London, the fleet and the army determined to make another

grand assault on the town, and spoke boastfully of how, on this occasion, they would carry all before them. But they failed as ignominiously as before, for the besieged, aided by their womenfolk and even their children, made so spirited a resistance that the besiegers



RESTALRIG.

The Deanery is supposed to have stood within the great gateway on the extreme left. Here, in still earlier centuries, stood Habb's Castle, a supposed corruption of Abbot's Castle.

were hurled headlong from the ramparts, leaving over one thousand killed and wounded around the walls.

The English had attempted to drive out the French from Leith by force, and had failed. Queen Elizabeth resolved to see what diplomacy could do, and a truce was made. Just at this stage Mary of Guise died. She had been long suffering from an incurable disease, and

had been allowed to retire to Edinburgh Castle, from which she daily looked towards Leith to see if the banner of her faithful and gallant Frenchmen still floated over the beleaguered town. The road to peace was made easier by her death. The English were tired of the siege, and when Queen Elizabeth's secretary, Sir William Cecil, afterwards the great Lord Burghley, arrived in the camp at Restalrig to arrange terms of peace, the soldiers made all the guns, great and small, thunder forth their welcome.

By the Treaty of Edinburgh, or the Treaty of Leith as it is sometimes called, the French were to leave the country within twenty days, the fortifications of Leith were to be demolished, and Queen Mary and Francis II. were to cease using the arms of England. But Queen Mary in France refused to sign the Treaty of Edinburgh, an act for which Elizabeth never forgave her. To the siege of Leith, then, is due in part the lifelong enmity that Elizabeth cherished toward Queen Mary. In resulting in the Treaty of Edinburgh the siege of Leith forms a great central landmark in the history of our country. The departure of the French marks the fall of the Catholic Church in Scotland, and the end of the ancient Franco-Scottish Alliance. The triumph of the leaders of the Congregation was the triumph of Protestantism, and the beginning of that union with England which gave rise to the kingdom of Great Britain, and has helped to make her the great world Power she is to-day.



## Chapter XXIII.

### QUEEN'S MEN *VERSUS* KING'S MEN.

THE Treaty of Edinburgh had no sooner been concluded than the Privy Council charged the provost, bailies, and council of the city to demolish the fortifications which the French with so much labour and skill had erected round Leith. In a short time the whole line of the defensive works facing Edinburgh was levelled with the ground. The walls on the east and west sides of the town remained, though in a ruinous state, for many years, and, as the "Ladies' Walk," the last portion continued to form a well-known landmark until about 1789.

On Tuesday morning, the 19th of August, a gloomy misty day that seemed to be grieving in sympathy with her on her separation from her beloved France, Queen Mary arrived in Leith Roads. She had not been expected till the last days of the month, when the nobles and gentry had been summoned "with their honourable companies to welcome her Majesty." No preparation had therefore been made to receive her, but the cannon of her two galleys soon brought out the people in crowds to greet her. She was accompanied by her three uncles of the House of Guise, by her four Maries, who, like herself, owing to their long residence in France, always spoke Scots with a French accent, and others of lower



LANDING OF MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS.  
(From a painting by Sir William Allan.)



order. On landing in the forenoon beside the King's Wark, a part of the Shore that has seen so much of the pageantry of Scottish history, she was received by the Earl of Moray and a great crowd of all ranks.

As no preparation had yet been made for her at Holyrood she "dynit in Andro Lambis house," in Leith, where, according to John Knox, she remained till towards evening, when she proceeded to the Palace. Queen Mary had not far to travel after landing to reach Andrew Lamb's house, for it stood, as parts of it may still, at the head of the close which has been named from himself as its chief resident—Andrew Lamb's Close—and is so familiar to-day to lovers of old-time Leith by the name of an eighteenth century inhabitant, Willie Waters, of whom no tradition or history has been preserved.

At the head of Water's Close, on the line of Water Street, stands a fine specimen of the picturesque street architecture of days long gone by, which shows us that, if the streets of the Leith of other and older days were narrow and gloomy, the eye of the wayfarer was ever being arrested by the quaint and pleasing variety presented by the outline of turret, roof, and gable against the background of the sky. This Water's Close mansion, the finest specimen of old Scottish architecture in Leith, was the house of the Lambs and their descendants down to a century ago; but how much of the old house as it stands to-day dates from Queen Mary's time it is hard to say. The dining-room of the Lambs, with its early seventeenth-century alcoved sideboard, now forms a house by itself of three apartments, and the other rooms have been similarly transformed. A great courtyard, which was once the garden of the mansion and in which Queen Mary may have strolled on that gloomy

far-off August day, is now a tradesman's yard, and may be entered from a pend in Water Street.

Later in the day the youthful queen continued her



ANDREW LAMB'S HOUSE, WATER'S CLOSE

journey to Holyrood. Though she captivated all by her beauty and stately carriage, her cavalcade did not form the brilliant pageant associated with the arrival of former princesses at the Shore, for the two Dutch ships carrying her horses and baggage had been cap-

tured by English war vessels and detained at Newcastle. In Mary's eye the ill-favoured little Scottish hackneys, so meanly caparisoned, on which she and her escort rode from the Shore to Holyrood, looked wretched indeed compared with the superb palfreys and their gay trappings to which she had been accustomed in France.

Story, but not history, associates two other Leith mansions with the ill-fated Queen Mary. The one is Hillhousefield House, now renamed Tay House since engineering works have invaded its once pleasant lawns and gardens that used to stretch down to the river's edge ; and the other is the stately old mansion of Trinity Grove, which did not come into existence till long after Queen Mary's time. According to story, the weeping thorn that once adorned the old garden of Hillhousefield was planted by the hapless queen's own fair hand.

But like many another fondly believed Queen Mary tree, it was not in reality planted by the queen, but grown from a slip taken from a tree the queen was believed to have planted. The name naturally continued to attach itself to the tree, but in the lapse of years the reason for the name passed from memory. The story of the ancient gardener of Trinity Grove, on his way to Holyrood with his basket of nettle tops over his arm for "sallets" to the queen, of which her French upbringing had made her extremely fond, is a pretty but wholly fanciful tale.

If the sorry steeds which conveyed Queen Mary and her retinue to Holyrood gave her an unfavourable impression of her native land, that feeling would in no way be relieved by the appearance of Leith at this time. The burnings of Hertford, and the destructive fire of the English guns during the siege of the year before, had left much of the town in ruins, of which the greater

part still awaited rebuilding ; for during this troubled and unsettled period the country was far from prosperous, and little building seems to have taken place. These two events—the burning of the town by Hertford, and its siege in 1559–60 by the Lords of the Congregation aided by the English—mark an important era in the history of Leith. Its oldest buildings, of which so very few survive, belong in all likelihood to a period subsequent to these disastrous events.

That the period following the siege of Leith and the troubled reign of Queen Mary was a great building era in Leith was very noticeable before the institution of the Improvement Scheme of 1881. This scheme brought about the formation of Henderson Street, when so many of Leith's ancient houses were swept into the builder's rubbish heap. The dated and inscribed lintels of such of those houses as possessed them all bore that they had been erected during the period covered by the dates 1570–1630. A few of these lintels have been rebuilt into the walls of the modern buildings erected on the sites of the old, and several are illustrated in this book.

The custom of engraving texts of Scripture or other pious legends on the lintels of their doorways seems to have been as common among the inhabitants of old-time Leith as among those of Edinburgh. These inscriptions speak to us not only of the piety but also of the superstition of our ancestors. They were not only meant to invoke God's blessing on the house and its occupants, but at the same time to act as a charm against the entrance of evil, whether from fairy or witch or even from Satan himself. In pre-Reformation days Leith girls and boys wore texts of Scripture suspended round their necks to protect them against harm from

similar sources. A survival of this superstition is the gifting of cake and cheese to the first person met on the street when a baby is carried to its christening. In the old superstitious days this gift was meant to propitiate any person met with whose appearance and look might betoken some evil wish or other malignant intention towards the child.

The recovery of the town from the effects of such destructive invasions as those of Hertford would have been much longer delayed but for the Reformation in 1560 and the peaceful reign of James VI. A period of comparative prosperity then set in, to which the many buildings erected in Leith at this time bear ample witness. The nobles and gentry, among whom the Church lands and other property had been so largely divided after the Reformation, found themselves suddenly richer than before, and spent freely in the erection of town houses, like Balmerino House in the Kirkgate and the large mansion dated 1615 in Queen Street, the only old one now remaining there. One which, till sixty years ago, stood opposite this house was once thought to have been the residence of Mary of Guise, and to that mistake the street owes its present name. An illustration of the tirling pin or ancient door-knocker of this house is shown in Chapter XXII.

Balmerino House and the old mansion still surviving in Queen Street are entirely different in their style of architecture from the earlier mansion of the Lambs in Water's Close, with its pointed gables so well adapted to a snowy climate like ours, and with their straight eaves, their string courses or decorative mouldings, and their dormer windows surmounted by thistle and rose finials show the Renaissance or new style that now came into fashion, largely from Italy. For the reformation



in religion was only one result of a great change that took place in men's thoughts at this period, the middle of the sixteenth century.



OLD MANSION, QUEEN STREET, ONCE AN EPISCOPALIAN  
MEETING-HOUSE.

The invention of printing helped to bring about this change. The first printing press was brought into Leith from Flanders for Walter Chepman in 1507. In his booth, first in the Cowgate and then in the High Street of Edin-

burgh, books were first printed in Scotland. With the introduction of the printing press mediæval times may be said to have ended in Leith and modern times begun. The wealth the spoliation of the Church brought to the nobles and gentry enabled them to spend more freely and to live more luxuriously. This brought greater wealth to the Leith and Edinburgh merchants and craftsmen. Their standard of living also rose, and showed itself in their more commodious houses and larger business premises, some of which remain with us in Leith to this day. Others, with quaintly decorated and inscribed doorways, may be found in the numerous closes off the High Street and Canongate of Edinburgh.

A very fine specimen of one of these Renaissance mansions, in which, however, later alterations had displaced the gable finials of the thistle and the rose for two chimneys, stood in the Coalhill until 1887, when it was taken down. It was a building of much historical interest, for it was closely associated with the leaders of the king's men in the cruel civil strife that set in between them and the queen's men after the unhappy Queen Mary had fled to her English prison. The gallant and chivalrous Kirkcaldy of Grange, with Maitland of Lethington, the Lairds of Restalrig and Drylaw, and other supporters of the hapless queen, unfurled her banner over the towers of Edinburgh Castle and determined to hold it in defence of her cause. Had the good Regent Moray not been cut off by assassination at Linlithgow all this trouble might not have arisen. His body had been brought by water to the Shore of Leith, where it was reverently received by the Guild of Hammermen, while the sorrowing townsfolk, fearful of what the future might bring them, did honour to the dead regent by lining the streets as his body was taken to its burial in St. Giles'.

Kirkcaldy made a raid on Leith. Gathering all the victuals he could seize from the merchants and their ships, he now stood prepared for a long siege. With the guns of the Castle pointed downward on the houses, he was easily master of the whole city, from which he drove the new Regent Lennox, the Earls of Morton, Mar, and Argyll, and some two hundred of the leading bur-



THE COUNCIL CHAMBER OF THE  
KING'S MEN, COALHILL.

gesses on the king's side. Among these were Edward Hope and Adam Fullarton, two strenuous supporters of Knox and the Reformation, and for that reason strongly opposed to the cause of Queen Mary. The king's men took up their quarters in Leith. It is at this time that the old Renaissance building facing the Coalhill comes into history as their council chambers, where they discussed their plans for carrying on the war.

For this reason the old alley leading to it from behind became known as Parliament Square, which has now given place to Parliament Street. During the two years the king's men were in Leith there could be no regular government of Edinburgh by the provost and magistrates, and so we have a gap in the council records, which do not again begin until some months after their return to the city.

The Leithers again suffered something of the horrors of war, for skirmishes took place daily between the king's men in Leith and the queen's men from the city and the Castle. But they suffered still more from the harsh treatment and high-handed dealings of the king's men from Edinburgh, who had forcibly taken up their quarters in their midst. These did not forget that the Leithers had been specially favoured by the dethroned queen, for she had endeavoured to make their town a free burgh to the detriment of the city which now ruled them. Their sympathies were thus strongly on the side of the ill-fated queen and the youthful yet unruly Laird of Restalrig, who was fighting under the banner of the gallant Kirkcaldy in Edinburgh Castle.

For these causes little consideration was shown to the Leithers. The Edinburgh burgesses who had fled from Kirkcaldy's guns began to erect houses and booths on their lands without ever saying by your leave, and when Helen Moubray, a great-granddaughter of Sir Robert Barton, complained to the regent, no satisfaction was given. The rude soldiery of Morton who bore the brunt in the fighting had to be lodged and victualled by the oppressed inhabitants, who in many cases were forbidden the use of their own houses, which had been taken possession of by the rough soldiers of the harsh and cruel Morton.

After the death of Lennox and Mar, James, Earl of Morton, became regent in name as he had all along been in fact. Morton was a man of cruel and callous nature, and continued the fight against Kirkcaldy and the queen's men with the utmost bitterness and cruelty. "No quarter," was the cry of the king's men now that Morton was in command. All prisoners who chanced to fall into his hands were hanged in full view of the

Castle garrison at the Gallow Lee, where Leith Walk Station and the tramway depot are now. The queen's men of course retaliated in like manner, for no war stirs up so much hate among a people as civil strife, and Kirkcaldy would string up an equal number of prisoners on the Castle Hill or Moutree's Hill, now covered by the Register House. And so the cruel strife went on.

Slaughter and outrage were everyday events. Trade was brought to a standstill and hard times were everywhere, for the fields between the two towns being a daily battle-ground were left untilled. The farmer's horse was commandeered for Morton's troopers or yoked to his lumbering artillery. Kirkcaldy defended the Castle with the utmost courage and skill, and was so confident in his ability to hold out for any length of time against Morton alone that he indulged in a "rowstie ryme"—that is, a rude ballad—in which he mocked the attempts of his enemies to drive him from his stronghold—

“When they have lost as mony teeth  
As they did at the siege of Leith,  
They will be fain to leave it.”

But Kirkcaldy in his plans of defence had taken no account of the fact that, just as at the siege of Leith in 1560, Morton might be aided by a force from England; and this was what happened, for Queen Elizabeth, anxious for the success of the Protestant cause, sent a siege train to Leith by sea and an army under Sir William Drury from Berwick. They encamped by the Links in the neighbourhood of Bernard Street, perhaps at a spot which appears in local records six months later as Little London, seemingly for no other reason than this association with Drury's men. What Morton failed to do, treachery within the Castle and the English guns with-



out accomplished in May 1573, when Kirkcaldy and Lethington surrendered to Sir William Drury on condition that their lives would be spared. They were afterwards brought to the English camp at Leith. Lethington died in the Leith tolbooth, but whether from disease or by his own hand or those of his enemies has never been quite determined. Kirkcaldy, by Elizabeth's orders, and to the shame and grief of Drury who afterwards resigned his command, was surrendered to the tender mercies of the ruthless Morton and the burgesses of



LITTLE LONDON IN 1800.

(Now Bernard Street between Constitution Street and Quality Street.)

Edinburgh who had suffered so much at his hands. He was condemned to the ignominious death of hanging.

In his day of trouble Kirkcaldy's thoughts turned to his old friend David Lindsay, the much-esteemed minister of South Leith. When Knox was dying he had sent David Lindsay to warn Kirkcaldy, for the love he bore him, that he was fighting, not only in a losing cause, but in one that would bring shame and disaster to himself. That prophecy was now about to be fulfilled, for Kirkcaldy was hanged at the Cross two months after his surrender of the Castle, the faithful David

Lindsay standing by him to the end. By such shameful death died the gallant Kirkcaldy of Grange, the greatest Scots soldier of his day, and the last hope in Scotland of the cause of Queen Mary, who wept bitterly in her English prison when the Earl of Shrewsbury, with unkindly intent, told her the ill news of his death. The Laird of Restalrig, though condemned to die also, was afterwards set free, but on the same scaffold with Kirkcaldy was hanged another of the Castilians, as they were called, James Mossman, Queen Mary's goldsmith, whose initials and coat-of-arms, with other interesting carved stonework, still adorn his ancient booth in the High Street—now John Knox's House. Mossman's descendants of the same name are still goldsmiths in Edinburgh, as one may see from the name over the doorway of the jeweller's shop at 134 Princes Street.

The regent Morton and the king's men, driven to Leith by the Castle guns, now returned to their ruined houses in the city. These they repaired or rebuilt, and in Fountain Close, immediately opposite John Knox's House, are to be seen the two carved lintels with the inscription VINCIT VERITAS—that is, *The truth conquers*—and other pious legends which Adam Fullarton placed over his doorways in 1573 in celebration of his party's triumph. And now Leith was to be free from the cruel experience of war in her midst for the next seventy years, but companies of armed men embarking at the Shore of Leith for service abroad was to be a familiar sight for many years to come.

The ordinary rank and file of the Castilians were set free, says a contemporary chronicler, on condition that they enlisted for service in the Netherlands, where the Duke of Alva and the other merciless lieutenants of the bigoted Philip II. of Spain were oppressing Catholics

and Protestants alike, but especially the latter. The fall of Edinburgh Castle and the end of the Civil War had deprived many soldiers, both king's men and queen's men, of employment. Owing to the dearth of food the Government ordered that all idle men and soldiers were to quit the city and might pass to the wars in Flanders, where they were soon to be found fighting side by side with the Netherlanders against their Spanish oppressors. Few ever saw their native land again, for the ferocious Spaniards gave no quarter to those who fell into their hands, but their memory can never die so long as Scots maidens sing the fine old ballad with its beautifully pathetic refrain, "The Lowlands of Holland hae twined my love and me."

There is one other incident associating the name of the much-hated regent Morton with Leith. His policy as regent was much opposed by many of the leading nobles, but in 1578 a reconciliation was effected, when Morton and his chief opponents, including the Earls of Argyll, Montrose, Arran, and Boyd, celebrated the event by dining jovially at a hostelry in Leith kept by one William Cant. There had been Cants in Leith, mostly sailormen, for many generations. Cant's Ordinary or Hostelry is supposed to have been the quaint old building raised on pillared arches which for centuries stood in the Kirkgate at the head of Combe's Close. The site of this ancient place of entertainment is now fittingly occupied by Kinnaird's Restaurant. The ceiling of Mr. Kinnaird's shop is a facsimile of the decorated plaster ceiling of the so-called Queen Mary room of its ancient predecessor, whose outline in carved stonework may be seen on an ornamental panel in front of the new building.

The house with its gable to the street immediately



THE KIRKGATE,  
showing Cant's Ordinary and House of William Kay.  
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to the left of the supposed Cant's Ordinary, and demolished at the same time as that ancient hostelry, was for centuries the property of a family named Kay. Here, or in its predecessor on the same site, in the reign of James VI., dwelt William Kay, mariner.

A noted interest attaches to this old Leith sailorman, for his descendants are actively engaged in the commercial life of the Port to-day. In every generation of this family, from William Kay's time until now, one or more members always seem to have followed a sea-faring life. Robert Kay was a shipmaster in 1739. William Kay, was chief mate of the sloop *Culloden* in 1787, when he was exempted from capture by the Press Gang, which, during the American and Napoleonic wars, periodically raided the Port from the warships in the Roads. It was from Leith aboard one of the warships in the Forth, although he was not a Leith man, that "Admiral" Parker, the leader of the mutiny at the Nore in 1797, enlisted in the navy. Another member of the Kay family was captain of the *Happy Janet* which brought Mons Meg from the Tower of London to Leith in 1829, when the whole town poured out to welcome the great "bombard" just as it had done some four hundred years before when she was unshipped on the Shore from Flanders. A great-grandson of the commander of the *Happy Janet* is an officer aboard a Leith steamer to-day.

When the fleet of James IV. sailed to France in 1513 one of the "blue jackets" aboard the *Great Michael* was a shipwright named John Kay. If this sailorman was of the same stock as William Kay, near neighbour to the host of Cant's Ordinary in 1601, then we have in Leith to-day members of a family that has the proud, and surely unique, distinction of having been associated with the shipping of the Port from the heroic age of the Bar-



tons and Sir Andrew Wood to our own day, a period of more than four hundred years.

The execution of Queen Mary in 1587 caused much indignation in Scotland, especially among a section of the nobles. When the Court went into mourning the young Earl of Bothwell appeared in a coat of mail, which he declared was the best "dule weed" for the dead queen. There were other causes of hostility at this time which mischief-makers made the most of to stir up strife between the two peoples. The English ambassador, when he once more dared show himself in Edinburgh after Queen Mary's execution, reported to Queen Elizabeth that the acts of piracy on the part of English seamen against Scottish ships were more numerous than in time of open war, and were so much resented that they were made use of to inflame the minds of the people against England. An English pirate cruised off the May Island and despoiled many ships entering the Firth. She was reported to belong to Sir Humphrey Gilbert, but that could not possibly have been true, for the gallant Elizabethan sailor had set out on what was to prove his last voyage just a month before, taking with him all the ships he could muster. Behind the May had always been a favourite lurking-place for English pirates

In 1587 Edinburgh commissioned and equipped one of Leith's largest ships to "pass upon the Inglis pyrats" haunting this quarter, but with what success does not appear. "But it so happened in God's pleasure," so we are told after the pious manner of the time, that the English pirates did not always have it their own way, for George Pantoun, a local skipper, and his good ship making their way homeward from Danzig to Leith brought a whole ship's crew of these rievvers with him, most of whom were hanged on the Sands, which had for

long been the customary place of execution for those who chose to sail under the "Jolly Roger." Many a bold pirate closed his lawless career on the gibbet on Leith Sands, where his body continued to hang in chains as a warning, but seldom, it would seem, as a deterrent, to others. The first notice we have of the bodies of criminals being suspended in chains in Scotland is in 1551, when John Davidson was first hanged and then hung in chains on the Sands of Leith "for the violent piracy of a French ship of Bordeaux."

But now the Scots and English were to lay aside their mutual hostility for a time in face of a common danger. This was the invasion of the Spanish Armada, perhaps the best-known fact in British history. Even the pirates were received into favour when they came to guard against the approach of the Spanish galleons; for had England gone down before the might of Spain, the subjugation of Scotland must have followed immediately thereafter. The merchants of Edinburgh and the sailormen of Leith had much cause to fear and hate the Spaniard. Their chief trade was with the Netherlands, and it had suffered greatly through the confused and unsettled state of those provinces, owing to the cruel oppression of their Spanish rulers.

Some of the more lawless Scots nobles like the Earl of Huntly, the slayer of the "Bonnie Earl of Moray," and perhaps the plotting Logan of Restalrig, were quite ready to join Philip in an invasion of England, or even to turn against their own country to avenge Queen Mary's death. Spies in the interests of Spain frequently came and went through the Port of Leith between Philip and these Scots sympathizers. One of these spies, Colonel William Semple, a member of an old Scots family who had fought on the side of Spain against

Holland, took up his lodging in Leith in the summer of 1588, nominally as an envoy from the Prince of Parma to King James, but really to negotiate with Huntly in the interests of Spain.

On August 8th, the very day on which the Great Armada was being driven in disastrous rout before the English "sea-dogs," a Spanish warship with some two hundred men aboard anchored off the Port and sent a boat ashore with sixteen men, bearing dispatches from Parma to Colonel Semple. But Sir John Carmichael, the Captain of the King's Guard, was too clever for them. He not only arrested the crew of the Spanish boat, but at the same time captured Semple and all Parma's dispatches. King James, with beating of drums and the ringing of the alarm bell in the Tolbooth, commanded the men of Leith to hold themselves in readiness to oppose any further attempts of the Spaniards to send men ashore.

Huntly advised Parma to invade England through Leith, which he could then hold as a postern giving easy entrance into England; but the ships of the "Beggars of the Sea" kept Parma shut up in the Netherlands. The danger to Scotland from Spain was therefore very real and very great. The result was a treaty for mutual defence between King James and Queen Elizabeth, and Scotland's fighting men were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to muster on Leith Links to repel the invader should he succeed in landing. Watchers were posted round the coast, and the balefires were to be lit on the first alarm.

Terrible was the consternation and fear in Leith and Edinburgh when it was known that "that monstrous navie was about our costes." As in the Great War, lying rumour brought in many false alarms. Now

the Spaniards, like the Germans, had landed at Dunbar, now at St. Andrews, and now somewhere in the north. It was not until a month after the Armada had left Spain that it was known to be in full flight round our shores, little better than so many storm-shattered hulks, four of which came to grief on the coast of Mull. The shipwrecked crews of these vessels, some seven hundred all told, "for the maist pairt young berdless men, trauchled and hungered," and utterly wretched, were all that the people of Leith saw of the Spanish Armada, for from the Shore, after being kindly treated, they were shipped over to the Duke of Parma in Flanders.

The fear and alarm with which the Leithers awaited the approach of the Armada were now changed to thankful prayers and joyful songs. In common with the people throughout England and the greater part of Scotland, the Leithers gathered in their two parish churches and poured forth their gratitude to God for His goodness and mercy. This was done in both countries in the words of the 76th Psalm, which celebrates Israel's miraculous deliverance from King Sennacherib and his Assyrian host.

A Scottish poet, calling upon his countrymen to celebrate with rejoicing so signal a deliverance, said,—

"Expose your gold and shyning silver bright  
On covered cupboard set in open sight."

Such a cupboard or open sideboard with stuccoed decoration still survives in what was once the dining-room of Andrew Lamb's house in Water's Close, where Mary spent the first day on her unexpected arrival from France.

Of all the carved stones of Leith, that which above all others engages our interest and excites our curiosity is the upper of the two panels built into the wall of the

house immediately opposite the head of St. Andrew's Square in the Main Street of Newhaven. The sculptures on the lower panel are similar to those on the south



SIDEBOARD CUPBOARD, ANDREW  
LAMB'S HOUSE.

wing of the Trinity House in the Kirk-gate. They are the heraldic arms of the Mariners' Incorporation of the Trinity House, and at one time must have adorned some of their property in the neighbourhood of Newhaven. How old this stone may be there is no date to show, but that the arms themselves must have been adopted over two hundred and fifty years ago the carvings on the stones themselves indicate, for, instead of the sextant, the shield bears its predecessor, the cross-staff, which has been obsolete

since the time of William of Orange.

It is the upper and more ancient of the two panels, however, which specially arrests our attention, for it bears, carved in curious fashion, the ever-memorable date 1588, the year of the destruction of the Great Armada.



Beneath this date is sculptured a sixteenth-century ship with the flag of St. Andrew, Scotland's naval ensign before the Union of 1707, flying from each masthead. Beneath all, in capital letters, is the legend, "In the



SCULPTURED STONES, NEWHAVEN.

Neam of God." The ship sculptured here much resembles the model now in the Royal Scottish Museum of the *Yellow Carvel*, that gallant old ship of Sir Andrew Wood.

Is it only a remarkable coincidence that this stone should bear so significant a date, or is there some connection between it and the rout and ruin of the vaunted Invincible Armada? Does it not seem as if the people of Newhaven wished to have some permanent memorial to remind them and those who came after them of God's signal mercy and goodness in so great a time of peril? If any of their number had been refugees from the hated tyranny and cruel persecution of the Spaniards, we can well understand the gratitude that led them to erect this memorial for their second escape from the terrors of the Spanish Fury and the cruelty of the pitiless Spanish oppressor.

The year following the destruction of the Spanish Armada saw another royal princess set sail from her native land to become a Scottish queen. This was Anne of Denmark, who was married to James VI. in 1589. On setting forth on her voyage her ship was so tempest-tossed and driven out of her course that she had to seek shelter in Christiania Harbour, where she remained all through the winter. James, becoming impatient at her non-arrival, sailed to Norway to bring her home, and the royal pair were married at Christiania by David Lindsay of South Leith, who had accompanied King James overseas, because he was "the minister whom the Court liked best." They set sail from Norway in the ship of Captain John Dick, whose only son, Sir William Dick of Braid, afterwards became a wealthy Edinburgh merchant prince and Covenanter, and Provost of the city.

On their arrival in Leith in May of the following year the whole town gathered on the Shore and Long Sands to welcome them, just as they did eleven years later when James crossed the Forth to Edinburgh after his escape from Gowrie House. A thanksgiving service for

their safe arrival was held in St. Mary's Kirk. As Holyrood was not yet ready for their reception, they stayed for six days at the King's Wark with the father of Bernard Lindsay, and then they passed on to Holyrood, the queen and her ladies riding in a coach drawn by eight great horses of her own, all richly caparisoned. The members of the trade incorporations, all armed as if for war, lined both sides of the way to the bounds of the town, when the duty was taken up by the men of Edinburgh and the Canongate.

James and his loving subjects had good reason, so he and they at least believed, to be thankful for his safe arrival from overseas, for it was discovered from a maid suspected of witchcraft that the storms which had so beset his homeward voyage had been the malignant work of witches, who wished to drown both him and his young queen. These witches had met at the Fairy Holes, near Newhaven, and then, sailing out to Leith Roads in riddles, had raised the storms by means of a christened cat which was given them by Satan himself. All these absurdities were most solemnly believed by both king and people, and a number of so-called witches were first strangled and then their bodies were burnt to ashes for their supposed share in so wicked a plot.

Such absurd beliefs show us how superstitious the people of Edinburgh and Leith were in those days; and, indeed, right down almost to the close of the eighteenth century many firmly believed in witchcraft. The place of execution for witches in Leith was the Gallow Lee, once a small hill at Leith Walk Station, of which a part still survives under the name of Shrub Hill. Here in 1664 nine witches, who were first mercifully strangled, had their bodies burnt to ashes; and in 1678 five more met a similar fate. The witch burning in Leith after

James's voyage from Norway has been made the subject of a long ballad by Robert Buchanan, entitled *The Lights o' Leith*, of which two verses are quoted below—

“ ‘ The lights o' Leith ! the lights o' Leith ! ’  
The skipper cried aloud—  
While the wintry gale with snow and hail  
Blew snell thro' sail and shroud.

“ High up on the quay blaze the balefires, and see !  
Three stakes are deep set in the ground,  
To each stake smear'd with pitch clings the corpse of a witch,  
With the fire flaming redly around ! ”



LEITH WALK STATION AND SHRUBHILL.  
(Site of Gallow Lee.)

## Chapter XXIV.

### LEITH AFTER THE UNION OF THE CROWNS.

THE people of Leith and Edinburgh had long hoped that when Queen Elizabeth died their own King James would be called to the English throne as her successor. And so it came to pass. But could they have foreseen the evils the Union of the Crowns was to bring in its train for them, their joy and pride in seeing their king ride forth from Holyrood amid the thunder of the Castle guns to rule over the "auld enemy" would have been sadly sobered and restrained. Leith had the honour of seeing three of her townsfolk accompany King James on his journey to London. There was the first Lord Balmerino, who had succeeded Sir Robert Logan as Laird of Restalrig, and, as Secretary of State, on Queen Elizabeth's death had proclaimed James VI. at the Cross of Edinburgh as King of England. With him were David Lindsay, Bishop of Ross as well as senior minister of South Leith, a great favourite at Court, and Andrew Lamb, Bishop of Galloway, in whose father's house in Water's Close Queen Mary had been hospitably entertained when she arrived so unexpectedly from France.

Before setting out for England James ordered that the King's Wark and the adjacent lands and buildings associated with it should become a barony, and this he gifted to the groom of his chambers, Bernard Lindsay,



granting him also a tax of £4 Scots on every tun of wine sold in the taverns in the King's Wark, of which there were never to be more than four. From this tax he was to erect in the King's Wark a bourse or exchange for merchants "for the decorating of the pier and Shore of the haven of Leith." This bourse has long ago disappeared, and so has its successor at the foot of Queen Street, a locality which old residents still call the "Burss." The French name *bourse* is a relic of the French occupation of Leith in the time of Mary of Guise and the long trade connection of the town with France.



LEITH HARBOUR, 1680,

showing the King's Wark on the extreme right, Old Ship Inn, New Ship Inn, and Mylne's Land, but no Signal Tower (built 1685).

The word is still a place-name in Leith in a corrupted form in Timber Bush. Leith has to-day a memorial of Bernard Lindsay in Bernard Street, which was opened right through a part of the King's Wark more than one hundred and fifty years ago.

A considerable yearly income in the way of rents was derived from the buildings that went to form the King's Wark. It was out of these that James III. and James IV. gifted the annual grant of £28 to the Collegiate Church of Restalrig, which Bernard Lindsay continued to pay to South Leith Church. When the Town Council of Edinburgh purchased the King's Wark in 1647 they

became liable for this financial burden on the property, which they pay annually to the South Leith Kirk Session, a yearly transaction that links our days with

“ The old unhappy far-off times  
And battles long ago,”

for it was in 1512, the year before Flodden, that James IV. made over his gift. Part of the walls of the King's Wark may be incorporated in the quaintly gabled old tenement now occupying the greater part of the site.

The Union of the Crowns itself, though of great benefit to England in freeing her from the menace of invasion from Scotland when she engaged in continental war, was very far indeed from being an unmixed blessing to the people of Leith and Edinburgh. The removal of the king and court to London meant much loss to Edinburgh's merchants, and consequent injury to the trade of Leith. But that was not their only loss. The absurd claim of the Stuart kings, after they became British sovereigns, to rule by divine right led to such tyrannical methods of governing Scotland that Parliament for years together did not meet. That did much injury to the general merchant, for the hundred and forty-five Lords and the hundred and sixty Commons who, with their wives and families, were wont to throng the city for a longer or shorter period every year, and to bring in their wake much gaiety and business, did a good deal to stimulate and encourage local trade. As Edinburgh's trade was affected so was that of its port of Leith.

But if Leith's local trade was injuriously affected by the Union, her overseas trade suffered still more, and, indeed, was at times almost brought to a standstill. During the seventeenth century the two countries with

which England was most frequently at war were France and Holland ; but these were the very countries with which Leith carried on most trade. Through her sovereign, as King of England, Scotland was, of course, involved in these wars, and her trade with the enemy forbidden. She was then in the embarrassing position of having to fight those with whom she wished to be friends, and of having to pay heavy taxes to carry on wars that ruined her own trade. The result was that Scotland frequently disregarded the prohibition against trading with the enemy. We find Leith ships sailing to and from France and the Low Countries during the French and Dutch wars of the seventeenth century, to the great indignation of the English, who looked on the Scots in general, and the Leithers in particular, as they were the chief overseas traders, as little better than traitors, because the French favoured them "after the old manner."

But English foreign policy even in times of peace was often a menace to Leith's shipping trade. England's Navigation Act of 1614 forbade the importation of goods into England except in English ships. The French Government naturally retaliated by issuing a similar decree for France. Now such a policy on the part of France, if carried out against Scotland, would have meant ruin for many a Leith shipowner. From the reign of James IV. a goodly number of Leith ships had always been hired and employed by Frenchmen in their own carrying trade, and would be now laid up for lack of cargoes.

The Scots at once reminded Marie de Medici, the Queen-Regent of France, that the French still enjoyed their old trading privileges in Scotland, in spite of the new English regulations. The Scots had enjoyed the

same rights as French subjects in France from the marriage of Queen Mary with the Dauphin in 1558.

Nor did the Union of the Crowns bring Leith any recompense of increased trade with England by way of compensation for this loss of overseas trade, for she was as much shut out from any share in English foreign and colonial trade as she had been when the two countries were under separate sovereigns. England persisted in a policy towards Scotland of always subordinating Scotland's interests to her own by shutting her out from any share whatever in those rights and privileges of trading with the Colonies and Plantations, which she considered belonged to Englishmen only. King James, who, in his own way, was ever anxious for the welfare of his Scottish subjects, wished the two countries to be brought into commercial as well as regal union. The English commercial classes were bitterly opposed to this scheme, which, although it failed, was not altogether without good result.

After the Union of the Crowns there was frequent trouble between the Scots and their English neighbours, who were much given to piracy and violent outrages at sea. In 1610 nine English pirates were sentenced "to be hangit upon the Sands of Leyth until they be deid." In the same year thirty more were doomed to this fate at the same place. The gibbet stood within the "flood mark," nearly opposite the foot of Constitution Street. To avoid all such trouble as far as possible, King James issued a proclamation that the ships of both nations were to carry at their maintops the flags of St. Andrew and St. George interlaced. It was now that the Union Jack first made its appearance in Leith harbour. The ships of Scotland had also to carry at their stern the flag of St. Andrew, while those of England were to fly, in the same place, that of St. George.

In Scotland up to this time each royal burgh had protected its own trade area against encroachment by every other burgh, free or unfree. Now this monopoly of the royal burghs, where all trade was controlled by the merchant and craft guilds, was about to be broken down, because it could not be made to fit in with the new ways of trading that were beginning to come into vogue. The old methods had already broken down in England, where any one might carry on trade whether he was a member of the local guilds or not. The first step in this direction in Scotland was taken in 1597. By this date the Spanish treasure ships had imported so much gold and silver from America that there had been a general fall in the value of money throughout Western Europe, and King James's income was no longer sufficient for his needs. As a remedy taxes were imposed on Scottish imports for the first time. From taxes for revenue purposes only to taxes for the protection of home industries is but a step. Such a step meant in time the end of mediæval and the beginning of modern methods of trading, for from this time the protection of trade began to be a national instead of a local matter, and was no longer left to each burgh in its own district.

The step of fostering home industries by heavy protective duties seems to have been first taken in Leith, where several new industries were introduced in James's reign, and began Scotland's career as a manufacturing country. This was done by the grant of patents, or monopolies, to certain merchants, giving to them the sole right of manufacturing certain articles whose importation from abroad was prohibited. Under the old system of trading only burgesses of Edinburgh, who were at the same time members of the merchant guild, could engage in commerce in our district. Up to this



time no Leithers could be merchants, as we understand the term to-day, although Sir Andrew Wood and the Bartons are often erroneously described as Leith merchants. They were shipowners, a calling that no doubt gave them many opportunities for trading, and they could always find markets abroad for cargoes of their own, either obtained in foreign ports or by piracy. While merchants might have storehouses and even booths in Leith, they had to reside in the city or forfeit all their rights and privileges as merchant burgesses, and become "unfree." But merchants who obtained monopolies could reside and carry on their trade wherever they pleased, without being either free burgesses or guild brothers.

In the wall of the Corporation Buildings, opposite Meeting-house Green, is a carved stone from the old building which previously occupied the site, bearing the inscription—

BUILT 1583. REBUILT 1800.

T. J.

This ancient building had been for generations the Leith Soap-work, which has now removed to Broughton Road. T. J. were the initials of Thomas Jameson, a noted Leith merchant in his day and proprietor of this old soap-work at the close of the eighteenth century. Down to 1619 foreign soap only was used in this country, and was mostly imported from the Low Countries. In that year Nathaniel Uddart, whose father had been Provost of Edinburgh, was granted the monopoly of soapmaking in Scotland for twenty-one years, on condition of paying an annual duty of £20 to the Crown. He erected "a goodly work" in Leith to carry on its manufacture. But it does not seem to have been too prosperous. And

indeed that is not surprising, for in Leith in those days, and everywhere else for that matter, not many washed every day as they are expected to do now.

Nathaniel Uddart was one of the most active and enterprising merchants of his time. The manufacture



MEETING-HOUSE GREEN AND THE OLD SOAP-WORK.

of soap was the first but not the only industry he established in Leith. To obtain a supply of oil with which to carry on its manufacture Uddart received a further patent to trade in oil obtained from the whale fishing in Greenland. This led to much trouble with the English Muscovy Company, trading with Russia through Archangel, then her only seaport, for at this time she had no possessions on the Baltic coast. The Muscovy Com-

pany looked on the entry of Leith ships into the Arctic Seas as an infringement of their monopoly, and resisted them with "wild outrages, riots, murder, and effusion of blood."

Uddart's patent seems to have been either recalled or allowed to lapse, for in 1634 a new grant was made to Patrick Maule of Panmure, "His Majesty's daily servitor." Panmure Close, in the Canongate, just below the parish church, where a large portion of the family mansion still remains, preserves the memory of this family in our midst. Like Uddart, Maule also sent ships to the Greenland whale fishing and to Archangel, from which he imported materials used in the soap factory at Leith; but the oil and tallow for this purpose were both more extensively and more conveniently shipped from Danzig and Königsberg, the two chief centres of Leith's trade with the Baltic Seas. The manufacture of soap and the whale fishing were to continue to be two of Leith's staple industries for the next two hundred and fifty years. From this time Leith was no longer simply a trading port. With the soap and oil works of Uddart and Maule she enters on that career which has made her to-day not only a great seaport but a busy and prosperous centre of industry as well.

But the departure from the old methods of trading under the hampering control of the merchant and trade guilds was only in its infancy, and developed slowly in the seventeenth century. Indeed it was impossible it could be otherwise. Apart from the dislocation of trade through England's wars with France, Spain, and Holland, in which Scotland was her unwilling partner, with such troubles as the civil wars of Charles I.'s time, and the misgovernment and persecutions all through the reign of his son, Charles II., no country could thrive. Scotland

was thus kept in a state of poverty. There was little money with which to start new industries, and capital was scarcely more plentiful in Leith than in other parts of the country. The manufactures introduced by the enterprise of the ever-active Uddart struggled along rather than progressed, and sailing, fishing, and farming the lands immediately around the town were still, as in older days, the chief occupations of Leith's inhabitants.

The want of capital with which to begin and support new industries, and later the disturbing effect of the civil strife in Charles I. and Cromwell's time, led to much unemployment at home. Scotsmen, therefore, as at the close of the wars between king's men and queen's men, still sought fortune abroad in continental wars.

One of the largest and most beautiful comets that have ever been chronicled appeared in our northern sky in the beginning of 1618. Leithers, like other Scotsmen, gazed night after night with awe and wonder on the blazing messenger, for messenger they believed it to be.

Ben Jonson, the friend of Shakespeare, and after him the greatest of the Elizabethan dramatists, came to Scotland at this very time. During the whole period of this comet he was residing in Leith in the house of Mr. John Stuart, Water-Bailie, and owner of the ship, *The Post of Leith*. Here he was visited by that eccentric Londoner, John Taylor, the Water Poet, while on his Penniless Pilgrimage. Taylor had been hospitably entertained at the King's Wark by Bernard Lindsay and his good dame Barbara, a Logan of Coatfield. Jonson wrote a journal of his tour, which, unfortunately for us to-day, was burnt while in manuscript through his house taking fire, and thus much valuable information about Leith and his many friends there, among whom we may number



THE SHORE,  
showing New and Old Ship Hotels, Bernard Street, and site of King's Work.



the Nisbets of Craigentenny, was lost to us. The great Elizabethan must often have discussed the strange stellar visitant with those friends who knew not what to make of it.

“The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes,” says Shakespeare, and the superstition of the age afterwards held this unusual visitant to have been a portent of the Thirty Years’ War that broke out in the same year. In this great struggle James’s only daughter Elizabeth and her kingdom of Bohemia were overwhelmed with misfortune. Scotsmen deemed it a patriotic duty to go to her support. Scotland became a chief recruiting ground for raising levies to support the Protestant cause in this war championed by Gustavus Adolphus, the “Lion of the North,” and Leith was the chief port for their embarkation. Now we see the “fighting Wauchopes” of Niddrie sailing away in command of a company; now a troopship leaves the Shore with much cheering. Under the brilliant generalship of the “Lion of the North,” Scotsmen like Sir Patrick Ruthven and the two Leslie’s learned soldiering abroad, which they used afterwards with such skill in Leith that its effects are still plainly visible in the town to-day. But these wars were a serious drain on the manhood of the country, and the sorrow they caused finds touching expression in more than one old song—

“Oh, lang, lang is the travel to the bonnie Pier o’ Leith,  
Oh dreich it is to gang on foot wi’ the snaw drift in the teeth!  
And oh, the cauld wind froze the tear that gather’d in my e’e,  
When I gaed there to see my love embark for Germanie.”

But the chronic poverty of the country drove thousands more abroad in pursuit of trade. A great deal of the foreign trade of Leith, especially with Poland

and other lands bordering the Baltic Sea, was carried on by pedlars, who, when their ships reached such ports as Danzig, Königsberg, or Stralsund, went round the country, and especially the village fairs, selling to the peasantry, as Breton onion-sellers used to do in Leith and Edinburgh before the Great War, and are now doing again since the arrival of peace. This was one reason why English merchants opposed King James's commercial union between England and Scotland, because the Scots, they declared, "trade after a meaner sort and condition in foreign parts than we, by retailing parcels and remnants of cloth and other commodities up and down the countries, as we cannot do, because of the honour of our country, for their poverty is ever a spur unto them to make them industrious."

Poland and Eastern Prussia were the Canada for Scotsmen in those times, and few vessels sailed from Leith for the Baltic Sea that did not carry emigrants to those lands, as ocean liners do to Canada from Glasgow to-day. The descendants of those old Scottish emigrants, like General Mackensen (Mackenzie), were among Germany's best soldiers in the Great War.

James Riddle, the successor of Patrick Maule in carrying on the manufacture of soap in Leith, was the son of one of those Polanders, as they were called. Riddle's Close, whose name has in recent years been changed to Market Street, for over two hundred and fifty years preserved the name, if not the memory, of this old Leith merchant.

When James I. set out for England in 1603 he promised to visit Scotland every three years, but a period of fourteen years was to pass before his Scottish subjects were to see him once more among them. The news of his coming caused the greatest bustle and excitement

in Leith and Edinburgh, for it seemed an impossibility to provide lodging, not to speak of provisions, for the huge following he was expected to bring with him, and for the nobility and gentry who would be sure to come to town during his Majesty's visit. King James and his nobles travelled on horseback from Berwick to Leith, from which he made his State entry into Edinburgh.

It was strongly believed that the main object of this, his first and only visit after the Union, was to complete the work of establishing Episcopacy in Scotland. The Leithers, who were sternly Presbyterian, had already had experience of James's endeavours to bring the Church of Scotland into line with that of England in polity and service. King James, even in far-off London, kept an eye on the doings of the Scottish clergy, and had every one exiled or imprisoned who opposed his Church policy. In January 1606 six ministers, including Mr. John Welch, who had married the daughter of John Knox, were condemned to be banished for life from their beloved land for their resistance to the king's arbitrary measures in putting down the Church of Scotland. They were to sail to the Continent from Leith, where they stayed with Mr. Morton, the minister of South Leith Parish Church, until their departure, of which we have a touching description from one of their contemporaries, that reminds us of another parting long before on the shore at Miletus.

"The ship being ready, and many attending their embarking, they fell down upon their knees on the Long Sands and prayed several times very fervently, moving all the multitude about to tears in abundance and to lamentation, and after they had sung the 23rd Psalm, joyfully taking their leave of their brethren

and acquaintances, passed to the ship, and upon the morn, getting a fair wind, were safely transported and landed in France." Next year Mr. Morton himself was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle for an "impertinent sermon" against Episcopacy, nor, after a year, was he released except on condition that he should "preach not and goe not to Leith."

The Leith folk felt themselves confirmed in their convictions regarding the purpose of James's visit when a ship arrived in the harbour from London with organs, paintings, and stained-glass windows to fit up Holyrood Chapel for service during the king's stay among them. Indeed these mischievous innovations, as they held them to be, had been supernaturally foretold by such a swelling of the sea at Leith that the like had not been seen before for a hundred years. This abnormal tide was taken as a forewarning of some evil to come. The "evil to come" was of course afterwards seen to be James's choristers with their white surplices, his organs, his paintings, and idolatrous windows set up in the chapel royal of Holyrood.

Eight years afterwards Leith had another supernatural warning. On Tuesday, March 29, 1625, one of the greatest storms on record raged round our coasts. The water in the harbour overflowed on to the Shore, carrying boats with it, and doing much damage. "It was taken by all men," says a credulous historian, "to be a fore-runner of some great alteration. And indeed the following day a sure report was brought hither that the king departit this life the Lord's day before," and thus the same kind of portent that had foretold his visit to Scotland was now held to have been warning of his death, in accordance with the superstitious beliefs of the age.

James was succeeded by his son, Charles I., who made

his first visit to Scotland in 1633, which was to begin for Leith the most troubled period of her whole history, a period which continued for fifty-five years. In honour of the king's visit a new pulpit was placed in South Leith Church, and it is believed that the carved stone, with the royal arms and the letters C. R. for Carolus Rex, in the front of the church tower facing the Kirkgate, was then built into the stonework of the church in his honour also. The old sculptured stone that adorned King James's Hospital was built into the north face of the tower in 1822. Besides the two panels containing the royal arms in the church tower there are within the entrance porch two beautifully carved stones, one of which, taken from her mansion that once stood in Water Street, shows the arms of Mary of Guise. The other, showing the arms of her daughter, Mary Queen of Scots, once adorned the old Tolbooth in the Tolbooth Wynd, first erected in her reign. Thus we have four original and consecutive royal arms, from James V. to Charles I., built into the church tower, two within the structure and two outside.

The visit of Charles I. in 1633, like that of his father James in 1617, was mainly undertaken with a view to bringing the Church of Scotland into harmony with that of England in its form of worship. For this purpose Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, drew up a service book to be used in Scottish churches. The introduction of this service book led to the Jenny Geddes riot and the drawing up of the National Covenant in February 1638.

The Covenant was sworn to by the people of South Leith in St. Mary's Church on Thursday, 12th April, when the minister of Greyfriars' read and expounded it. Then "he gurd the people stand up, hold up thair right hands, and swear very solemnly, which God blessed



with ane very sensible motion." On Sunday, 22nd, it was similarly sworn to by the folk of North Leith in the Church of St. Ninian, where their own minister,



SCULPTURED STONE FROM MARY OF GUISE'S HOUSE, WATER STREET.

Mr. Fairfoul, preached from Revelation, 3rd chapter and 2nd verse, a very fitting text for the occasion. By far the most interesting of the original copies of the National Covenant is the one in the Edinburgh Corpo-

ration Museum, in which there are over four thousand signatures, among them that of the second Lord Balmerino, one of the staunchest upholders of the Kirk of Scotland at this time.

All the work of Charles and Laud was now undone. The king, determined to secure obedience to his Church policy by force of arms, marched an army to Berwick for this purpose. But the Scots captains and troops, who had fought so gallantly for the Protestant cause on the blood-drenched battlefields of Germany, came pouring homewards when they heard that Scotland was in danger, and under Sir Alexander Leslie, his nephew Sir David, and that skilled general of artillery, Sir Alexander Hamilton—"Dear Sandy," as he was affectionately and familiarly called—they mustered on Leith Links to the number of twenty thousand. "Sandy" Hamilton refortified the town on a new plan. The nobles and their ladies, together with the townsfolk—men, women, and even children—joined enthusiastically to defend the Kirk and Covenant by helping to carry the earth of which the walls were composed, while three shiploads of arms were sent to Leith from Holland for the equipment of Leslie's army encamped on the Links.

The stout Sir Patrick Ruthven, nephew to the grim Lord Ruthven who took so dramatic a part in the murder of Rizzio, also returned from the wars in Germany to be made governor of Edinburgh Castle on the king's side. Ruthven and his family came to take up their residence in Leith, as did so many of the gentry in the seventeenth century; but with the exception of Balmerino House, and one or two survivals in Quality Street and Restalrig, few remains of their old mansions are to be found among us to-day. The Ruthven family had their pew in South Leith Church. In 1638 Sir Patrick

gifted to the congregation two communion vessels, which are still in use and which were the work of that wealthy goldsmith, Gilbert Kirkwood, who was at this very time absorbed in the building of his new mansion of Pilrig House.

The king sent the Marquis of Hamilton with a fleet to Leith Roads; but the town, where his own mother was among the defenders, was so strongly fortified that he dared not attack it. The strength and power of the Covenanting forces arrayed against him led King Charles to make terms with the Scots by granting the liberties they desired, and three years later he came to reside again at Holyrood. While playing golf on Leith Links news was brought to him of the terrible Irish massacres of 1641, and shortly afterwards he left Edinburgh never to return. In the next year the great Civil War between King Charles and the English Parliament began. Sir Patrick Ruthven, after a heroic resistance of six months, was forced to surrender Edinburgh Castle to Leslie and his Covenanting army from the Links.

Then by the terms of the Solemn League and Covenant, which were sworn to in the two Leith churches after a solemn fast, just as the inhabitants had formerly sworn to the National Covenant, the Scottish army under Leslie joined the English Parliamentary forces against the king, and with them across the Border went, as chaplain, Mr. Gibson, one of the two ministers of South Leith. Over the Border, too, went Sir Patrick Ruthven to fight as gallantly for King Charles as Leslie and the army of the Covenant fought against him. All through these unhappy years of division and strife "ye Ladie Riven" and her three daughters were allowed to live quietly and peacefully in their old Leith mansion, and to worship Sunday after Sunday in the family pew

in "ye loft bewast the pulpit" in the Parish Church in the Kirkgate.

The story of the Civil War and the ruthless campaign of Montrose and his savage horde lie apart from the history of Leith, but the grievous strife of this time was to bring upon the town darker days than she had ever known.

Charles I. at golf on Leith Links has been made the subject of pictures by Sir John Gilbert, R.A., and Allan Stewart. Below is a reproduction of another painting by Allan Stewart, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1919. Its subject is the foursome on Leith Links in which James II. took part, as related on p. 358.



THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL FOURSOME.

(From a block kindly lent by The British Art Co., Ltd., New Bond Street, London.)

## Chapter XXV.

### PLAGUE AND PESTILENCE.

JUST as a wave of pestilence seemed to follow in the wake of the Great War with Germany, so in those evil days of civil war in England between Cavaliers and Roundheads, and of the fierce and savage campaign of Montrose in Scotland, Leith and Edinburgh were desolated with the last and most terrible outbreak of the plague they were ever to know. Sir Thomas Hope, the great Puritan lawyer of Charles I.'s time, as he sat in his stately old mansion, now displaced by the Edinburgh Public Library, records in his diary under May 12, 1645, "A dauchter of Sir William Gray's departit of the plaig, which put us all in greit fear." The dread scourge broke out in Leith about the same time, for, dated 3rd April, is the following ominous entry in the South Leith Church Records: "To furnish provisions for ye woman at ye Yarde heads who is steekit up (that is, shut up in her house) for feare of ye plague."

These cases were but the heralds of a fast approaching scourge. Soon death and desolation reigned in every street, and to add to the horror of the situation the pestilence was accompanied by famine, for the harvest of the previous year had been a failure. In old-time Scotland plague, or the pest as it was usual to call it then, frequently followed times of scarcity, and this,



together with the distress and anxiety caused by the protracted civil strife, had so reduced the vital powers of the people that their bodies, thus weakened, were



OLD YARDHEADS.

unable to resist the attacks of the pestilence. The filthy and evil-smelling streets, which were never cleansed, were in themselves fruitful sources of disease.

All who could, as in the severe outbreaks of 1475

and 1504, fled the town. As a result the infected were frequently left unattended, and in this way the death roll was largely increased. Dread of the plague made the people utterly selfish, a heartlessness of which we are still reminded by the saying, "to shun a person as if he had the plague." Where those who thus heartlessly forsook their friends and neighbours betook themselves we are not told, but wherever they had gone it was resolved to tax them for the support and maintenance of the poor of the town.

Among those who remained and did their best for the suffering people were the minister, the Rev. Mr. Sharp, and the session clerk, David Aldinstone—Mr. David he was respectfully called by the parishioners. One of his duties was the writing of the minutes of the session meetings. Mr. David's minutes at this time and for many months to come are wholly taken up with the plague which was absorbing all men's thoughts.

The minute-book, of seven hundred and sixty-five closely written pages, is entitled "Register of S. Leith Church, 1643 to 1660," and forms a valuable record of one of the most eventful periods in the history of the town, the period of the strenuous fight of the Army of the Covenant, of the last and greatest visitation of the plague, and of the invasion and occupation of the town by Cromwell's Ironsides, who for seven years closed the two parish churches to their congregations, and used them as storehouses for their artillery and other munitions of war. Save in Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year* in London, a highly imaginative work of fiction be it remembered, based on hearsay, no more interesting account of the ravages of plague and the efforts to cope with it was ever penned than that of Mr. David Aldinstone in this old session minute-book.

The Kirk Session, who in those times exercised a large police jurisdiction over the town, along with the Water-bailie and his Deputy, set themselves, as was usual in times of plague, to prevent the spread of the disease rather than to relieve those whom it had already stricken.

In doing this they took very enlightened measures. They instinctively felt that the cleansing of the town was the best way to check the scourge "quhilk be the Grace of God and good governance may be stanchit." But the cleansing of the streets was no easy task. Some idea of their state may be gathered from the first intimation on the subject, which declared that every one remove the middens and dead swine off the streets. (Pork was then very generally eaten. The pigs were housed beneath the outside stairs, and many had died from want of food, as their owners were either plague-stricken or dead.)

There was no town cleansing department in those days. Week after week, and month after month, carts were employed in this work, which became more and more difficult to accomplish as the plague spread and carried off one after another of the workers. The various cart-loads were, at first, laid down on the Sands within high-water mark, so that the flood-tide would carry them out to sea. To expedite the work, all those who rented fields or farms round the town were, on pain of being "laid fast in prison," to carry out the street refuse and lay it on their land. Then, in spite of the wages of those thus employed being raised, no new men for the work could be had, and so women and boys, especially those who had recovered from the plague, as they were not so liable to be again affected, were commandeered for this work, under threat of imprisonment if they refused.

The members of the Kirk Session reported all cases

of sickness to the two Bailies, but after a few days it was found that Bailies and Session were quite inadequate to cope with the work, and a meeting was held in the Tolbooth to make up a roll of helpers.

Men called quarter-masters were appointed to visit the different quarters of the town and report all new cases of plague. When the plague broke out in a family they had to indicate the fact by hanging a white cloth from their house. It was then the duty of the quarter-masters, as a preventive against infection, to lock them in and go round daily with their supply of food—three half-loaves and two quarts of ale each day. Tea and coffee were not yet in use. On the death of the infected member of the family, the others with their gear—that is, their household goods—of which people possessed much less then than now, were removed to a plague camp on the Links, where they were housed in “ludges” or wooden huts for many days till all fear of infection was gone. Meanwhile their houses were closed up until they were “singit and fyrit with hether”—that is, until they were thoroughly disinfected with the smoke of burning straw, whins with which the Links were then covered, or heather from the heathery braes around Pilrig and the Gallow Lee. After this process they were cleansed by being scrubbed out. But there was serious risk of fire from this singeing by the “smeikers.” Just two months before the town of Kelso had thus been completely burned down by the cleansing of “ane of the houses thereof whilk was infected by the plague.” For this reason, before any house was disinfected, “puncheons” of water were placed beside it in case of fire “to sloken the same.” The day of water mains and fire engines was as yet far off.

The number of “ludges” went on increasing as the

infection spread, and soon a regular town of them was built on the Links, divided into quarters to correspond to the quarters of the town. There were three great groups of these huts—one beside the Boothacre at Seafield, to which they probably gave the name; another stood between Links Place and Charlotte Street; while the position of the third is nowhere stated. An overseer was appointed for the "ludges" who was provided with a horse. It was his duty to ride round morning and evening to provide the occupants with their needful food from a store or magazine house in the neighbourhood of the huts. Quarter-masters were appointed for the Links as well as the town, but their courage must have failed them, as the overseer, Alexander Hay, complained that none would tend those there placed in quarantine save himself. But his own spell of office was short. Within a month he had fallen a victim to the plague, and after much difficulty a new overseer was at last found courageous enough to undertake the duty.

But now the supply of food began to fail. The famine had set in and supplies had to be obtained from Musselburgh and elsewhere, but they had to be paid for. It is impossible for us in our day to realize the gloom, the terror, and the distress of the folk of Leith at this time. The streets were deserted, for even those who had as yet escaped the attack of the scourge dreaded meeting their neighbours for fear of infection. The horse in the dead cart had to be taken to Restalrig, where the plague also raged, to be shod, as no smith could be found at work in Leith. Perhaps it is to the sorrow and sadness of this time we owe the legend in large Roman lettering over the old doorway in St. John's Close, Canongate: **THE LORD IS ONLY MY SUPORT,**



for to arrest the progress of the plague seemed beyond the power of man.

For the first few weeks after the outbreak the victims of the pestilence were buried in the churchyard. But the dead now became so numerous that to dig individual graves was no longer possible. Besides, it was feared the infection might burst forth anew if ever the graves



WELLINGTON PLACE.

were reopened for future burials. The dead were now buried on the Links in great trenches, mostly in the neighbourhood of Wellington Place, where their remains are frequently uncovered in digging the foundations of new buildings. Those who died in the plague camp at Boothacre were interred on the Links near Seafeld, at first in "deid kysts," or coffins, and then simply in the blankets in which they died, "for the number of the dead exceeds the number of the living, and some

lyeth long unburied." To avoid infection as far as possible the removal and burial of the dead was done under silence of night. In Leith the dead-cart was William Strachan's slaid—that is, sledge—a common form of cart everywhere in earlier days, and on its side was hung "ane bell whilk sal make warning to the people."

In the older portion of South Leith Churchyard, the part on the south side of the church, it is very noticeable how the graves lie east and west in parallel rows, a relic of pre-Reformation times. In Covenanting days we are led to believe that the people sternly turned their backs on everything that savoured of the old faith. Yet the plague graves, both at Wellington Place and the Boothacre, hasty as the interments must have been, all lie east and west, while the bodies, apparently without exception, had been buried with the hands crossed or in the attitude of supplication like the pre-Reformation effigies of the Forresters in Corstorphine Church. Where there were coffins they were of plain fir deals—that is, they were of home-grown timber and bore no signs of ever having been covered or decorated with cloth, which was not customary at that time.

The records of North Leith Church for this period have long since disappeared, so that no details of the ravages of this last visitation of the plague in North Leith are now known. Remains of interments have been found near the coast between Leith and Newhaven. These were supposed at the time to have been the graves of Cromwell's soldiers who died during their occupation of Leith from September 1651 to the close of the year 1659. They are more likely to have been those of victims of the plague.

In the vicinity of the plague camps the clothes and other effects of the stricken or suspected persons were

purified by being boiled in large cauldrons erected over peat fires in the open air. They were then further disinfected by being smoked in kilns built for this purpose. One of these cauldrons came from the brewery of James Storrie, who is no doubt name-father to Storrie's Alley. A kiln, convenient both for Leith and Restalrig, was erected on Logan's Lea, the meadow-land beside the loch at Lochend, where, curiously enough, an old building like a kiln stands to-day beside the allotments on the rising ground just north of the loch. Local tradition, which so frequently leads us astray in the story of Leith, declares this building to have been a dovecot, but an examination of the interior would seem to disprove this belief.

The plague began in April, and raged all the summer and autumn, but the cold and storms of winter came as a blessing to the stricken town. The scourge then began to abate, and, after threatening more than once to break out again, disappeared with the approach of spring. The population of South Leith before the outbreak could hardly have exceeded 4,000 people. Of this number 2,421, or considerably more than half, had been carried off.



THE BUILDING ON LOGAN'S LEA,  
LOCHEND.

In Restalrig the victims numbered 160, while in the Craigend or Calton there died 155. The total for the whole parish was therefore 2,736. Many houses were left uninhabited, as their occupants had fallen victims to the ravages of the plague. The town was left overwhelmed with debt, her trade had been brought to a standstill, and it was years before she regained her wonted prosperity. Unless the kiln at Lochend be one, there is no other memorial of this piteous time in Leith save the graves of the unknown victims. Edinburgh possesses three interesting memorials of this last and most terrible visitation of the plague—in the tombstone in the grounds of Bruntsfield House, the Morocco Land in the Canongate, and the "plague ceilings" in Brodie's Close, Lawnmarket, with the dates 1645 and 1646, showing that the work was suspended during the pestilence and completed when it had passed in 1646.



A PLAGUE GRAVE AT HOLYROOD.

(Tomb of the father of R. Mylne, King's Master Mason.)

## Chapter XXVI.

### CROMWELL'S IRONSIDES IN LEITH.

MEANWHILE, the Civil War was being waged in England between the forces of King Charles on the one side and those of the Parliament, aided by the Scots under Sir Alexander Leslie, on the other. Beyond the defeat and surrender of King Charles the Solemn League and Covenant accomplished nothing more, save the setting up of the Westminster Assembly, which gave to Scotland the Shorter Catechism and a new metrical version of the Psalms—the one we still sing in our churches. This new version was first introduced into the two Leith parish churches on Sunday, May 15, 1650.

The execution of Charles I. filled the Scots with grief and anger, for they were loyal as well as religious. They now proclaimed his son Charles II. king, and a commission which sailed from Leith invited him over from Holland, where he lived as a fugitive from his kingdom. Unwilling to accept the crown by subscribing to the Covenant, he first sent over the Marquis of Montrose to effect a rising in his favour. But Montrose was defeated and captured, and brought over the Forth to Leith, where a public thanksgiving in gratitude for his overthrow had been held in St. Mary's Church two days before. On Saturday afternoon the 18th of May he was taken to Edinburgh, when bonfires blazed and



the church bells rang out a merry peal to mark the event. Charles now agreed to the Covenant, and three weeks later landed in Scotland and rode to Stirling Castle.

The reception and acknowledgment by the Scots of Charles as their lawful king at once provoked the English Parliament to war, and Cromwell was sent to invade Scotland and reduce the country to obedience to the Commonwealth. Cromwell's army, in accordance with the strategy of former English invasions, was accompanied by a fleet, which kept in touch with the troops as they marched along the coast, and came to anchor in Leith Roads without opposition. For at this time Scotland had only one ship of war, the good ship *James* of Leith, which had somehow been pressed into service for Montrose's expedition, and, after his execution, had been recaptured and brought into Leith, with all his secret papers aboard. Leith's shipping had never been so reduced, for with no ships of war to protect it it had become a prey to the attacks of royalist privateers and the many pirates with which the North Sea swarmed at this time. And now Cromwell's fleet under Admiral Deane and Captain Penn, the father of the founder of Pennsylvania, captured what remained, and, destroying some, pressed the rest into the English service.

The fortifications of Leith were repaired and strengthened under the superintendence of John Mylne, the King's Master Mason, and a Covenanting army under Sir David Leslie, who could outmatch even Cromwell himself in the art of war, mustered on the Links. The Scots defences were mainly directed to protecting Edinburgh and Leith, for Leslie was determined that there should be no such occupation of Leith by the enemy as in the days of Hertford's invasions, or that of the French in the days of Mary of Guise. Cromwell could

have entrenched his whole army around its walls, and, with his navy to ensure constant supplies by sea, could have made it a base from which to bridle the whole of Scotland.

Leslie's plans to defeat any such purpose were wisely and skilfully chosen. To make it impossible for the enemy to enter Leith by sea a great boom was drawn across the mouth of the harbour. The landward defences were even stronger. The deep rugged valley of the Water of Leith formed an impregnable natural defence in the rear, while, facing the east, to resist the enemy's approach, Leslie had a great ditch or trench dug from Holyrood to St. Anthony's Port, opening into the Kirkgate a little above Laurie Street. Parallel to, and behind this defensive ditch, on the line of the present Leith Walk, was a broad rampart of earth which no artillery fire could breach, and which was protected by many batteries of "Dear Sandy's Stoups"—the cannon of Sir Alexander Hamilton, who was now sleeping his last long sleep in the family vault in Duddingston Churchyard. His cannon were so named from their resemblance to the long hooped wooden pails or stoups then, and for two centuries afterwards, used for carrying water from the public wells.

Leslie's defences proved insurmountable to the English, and baffled every attempt of Cromwell and his Ironsides to break through them. Knowing his troops to be no match for Cromwell's veterans in the field, Leslie resolved not to be lured from his trenches into the open. In front of his huge rampart lay the unenclosed fields, and beyond were the Figgate Whins, a great waste of heather and marsh, and much overgrown with clumps of whins, like the Whinny Hill on Arthur's Seat. The inhabitants of Restalrig and other villages had

sought refuge within the city walls or behind Leslie's ramparts, for the terror of Cromwell's name had everywhere preceded him from Ireland, from whose conquest he had just returned to enter on his Scottish campaign.

On Sunday evening, July 29, 1650, Cromwell reached Musselburgh, where he encamped his infantry on the Links and his cavalry in the town. Here he had his headquarters for the next month, and, on an elevation on the Links in front of Linkfield House, the site of Cromwell's own tent may even yet be traced in the grass. Next morning he led his whole force forward to the Figgate Whins around Craigentenny, posting his cavalry beside Restalrig, his foot in "that place callit Jokis Ludge," and his guns at the foot of "Salisberrie Hill, within the park dyke." There was hot skirmishing around Lochend and the Quarry Holes, whose mounds may still be seen within the east end of London Road Gardens. The Scots were driven in within their trenches by that dare-devil Puritan commander, General Lambert; but the fighting here was perhaps a feint to screen the main object of his attack, which was to bombard and capture St. Leonard's Hill, from which, with his artillery, Cromwell could have dominated the city. His men were utterly routed and driven off. At the same time four ships of the English fleet bombarded Leith with fire-balls and other missiles; but we have no record as to how their onslaught was repelled. On the whole the honours of the day remained with Leslie and the Scots, and the baffled English fell back upon their camp at Musselburgh.

That same day King Charles had ridden from Stirling to Leith, and had watched the day's fighting from the Castle Hill. In the evening he passed along the line of trenches to Leith, when he received a most joyous and

boisterous welcome from the troops, and took up his residence in the once noble mansion of Lord Balmerino, which still stands just off the Kirkgate, though now shorn of all its former state. There is also a tradition that the young king was entertained by the "bold Buccleuch" in the great mansion in Quality Street,



BALMERINO HOUSE, SHOWING RENAISSANCE DOORWAY.

which was then an inn, and is to-day a good specimen of old Scottish street architecture. The young king ardently wished to join in one of the sorties against the enemy; but Leslie would on no account agree to this, as the risks were too great. After a stay of several days at Balmerino House, the Scots leaders, to his own great disappointment, insisted on King Charles seeking a safer residence at Dunfermline.

During Charles's stay in the Kirkgate, a hospitality

for which his host was ill-requited after the Restoration, the Scots determined to surprise the English by beating up their quarters at Musselburgh under cover of night. The success of such a dangerous enterprise, of course, mainly depended upon their making their attack from the most unexpected quarter. About midnight over one thousand horsemen rode out from Leith towards Restalrig. Making a wide detour, they forded the Esk far above the most advanced line of English outposts, and rode along the high ground to the east end of Edgebucklin Brae. Here they formed up for the charge, and, dashing down upon the Links, broke right through the English camp, upsetting tents and cutting down all who attempted to oppose their progress. But Cromwell's cavalry quartered in the town soon rallied to the fray, and the Scottish horsemen had to make a straight run for Leith with the English cavalry close on their heels.

And so for a month the fight went on. Cromwell was not only unable to break through the Scots entrenchments, but every attempt to pass towards Queensferry to cut off Leslie's supplies from the west, and so starve him into surrender, was foiled. Baffled and defeated, his men dying daily of disease, thanks to the Lammas floods, which seemed to be in alliance with the Scots, Cromwell could do nothing but retreat.

And then there followed the disastrous Scottish defeat on the field of red Dunbar because of their disobedience to those very tactics of sitting tight which had completely baffled the English at Leith. Cromwell at once returned to Edinburgh and occupied Leith, when "the ministers and most part of all ye honest people fled out of the town for fear of yeemie." The charter chest of South Leith Church, containing the communion plate, the records, and other documents, was buried



beneath the floor of the church, where it lay for nearly two years before it was thought safe to remove it.

Ere long most of those who had fled the town returned, for Cromwell, by wise and just government, always endeavoured to win the Scots to the side of the Commonwealth. But the hearts of the Leithers were with King Charles, unworthy as he was to prove himself of their loyalty and devotion; and however wise and just their rule, the English well knew that the Leithers were ready to flame into rebellion when the opportunity arose. It was for this reason that General Monk shut up the two parish churches, and no prayers of the Leithers could induce him to reopen them, for he looked on the Scottish clergy as "trumpets of sedition," as they all preached in favour of the monarchy. Let us give the English commander's reason in his own words, for they show the Leithers still, as Henry VIII.'s ambassador found them in days before the Reformation, "noted all to be Christians."

"There was," Monk tells us, "so greate a resort of Scotchmen that there would bee above a thousand of them there on the Lord's Day, which I thought not safe to suffer any longer, the Magazine wherein our arms and ammunition are being so near the Church."

This magazine consisted of four closely adjoining buildings, King James's Hospital, the vault beneath the old Trinity House from which they evicted the Grammar School to one of the lofts of Riddle's soap-work, the Windmill Yard of the ancient St. Anthony's Hospital, and the churchyard. On the expulsion of the congregation, the church itself was used for housing their artillery. Monk, like a wary and prudent commander, thought the English garrison ran great risks with so large a weekly gathering in the immediate neighbourhood of

what were their military depots until a citadel was built where both troops and stores could be safely lodged



MAIN GATEWAY OF CROMWELL'S CITADEL.

The people of Leith were allowed to hold church services where they pleased, so long as they did not gather in

the town. And so for nearly seven years the congregation had to wander in the wilderness, worshipping for the greater part of this period at Restalrig, but sometimes holding their services around the Giant's Brae, when, through the influence of James Riddle with the deputy-governor of the town, St. Anthony's Port was kept open "upon the Lord's Day betwixt 7 hours in the forenoon until 2 hours in ye afternoon for outgoing and incoming of the people to sermone in the Links."

The Citadel, "passing fair and sumptuous," built by Monk, was erected on the site of the Chapel of St. Nicholas at the foot of Dock Street, where its great arched gateway may still be seen. The house over the archway, according to tradition, was the meeting-place of the officers and men of Cromwell's Ironsides in Leith who held Baptist views. We know that there were Baptists in Leith during the Cromwellian period who were wont to go to Bonnington to be "dippit in the clear rynnand water." The house over the Citadel archway, however, is of later date than Cromwell's time, as is shown by the stair by which it is reached being outside, instead of inside, the Citadel gateway.

When the Citadel was built South Leith Church was restored to the parishioners. The opening services were marked by much rejoicing. The church had been given up largely through the influence of James Riddle, the wealthiest and most enterprising merchant in the town, and one in great favour with Monk and the other English commanders. He had succeeded Uddart and Maule in the monopoly of the soap manufacture in Leith. Riddle's soap-work was at the corner of the Dub Raw and Riddle's Close. This close, to which he was name-father, Leithers, with no knowledge of James Riddle and the town's indebtedness to him, have in recent years misnamed Market

Street. As there is already a Market Street in Greater Edinburgh with much more claim to the title, let us hope that Leith, in commemoration of the public service of its old-time patriotic citizen, James Riddle, will go back to the ancient designation, and, as the old thoroughfare is no longer a *close*, will rename it *Riddle Street*.

It may be that the two old skew stones bearing the initials I.R. or J.R. and the date 1659, built into the gables of the small tenement in St. Andrew Street looking towards Riddle's Close (Market Street), are a relic of James Riddle's soap-work which used to stand immediately across the street from this building.

But we have not yet exhausted the interest associated with the name of James Riddle. His father had been one of those enterprising Scots whom we have already seen embarking at the Shore of Leith to push their fortune in Poland. Having acquired great wealth there, he returned to Edinburgh, and set up house in that aristocratic quarter of the Old Town, the Lawnmarket, where Riddle's Close, one of the finest in the Royal Mile, still preserves his name, and where his house yet remains. His eldest son James, as we have seen, became one of Leith's leading townsmen, and an influential member of St. Mary's Kirk Session. From the address on one of his letters we know that Cromwell spent one night in Leith, when, according to a doubtful tradition, he was the guest of James Riddle. He is much more likely to have been lodged in Balmerino House, in whose extensive garden some of his chief officers were quartered in tents. In grateful remembrance of his many services, the Kirk Session bestowed on Riddle and his heirs a large space in the nave of the church for a family pew for all time coming. Such, in brief, is the story of James Riddle, one of Leith's early benefactors,

and a man who nobly deserves the simple recognition of having his name restored to the street in which, by his spirit and enterprise, he did so much to build up the trade, not only of Leith, but even of Scotland itself.

Of Leslie and his great rampart we ought to be reminded every time we go up and down Leith Walk, for there we are walking along the huge mound of defence behind which he baffled the mighty Cromwell in 1650. It has now taken the place of the Easter, the Bonnington, and the Restalrig Roads as the main highway to the city, because, since the opening of the North Bridge in 1770, Leith Walk has been the most direct route. Before 1650 what is now Leith Walk was merely a straggling pathway known as Leith Loan, that wound its way over the heathery waste and through the meadows and cornfields that then lay between the city and its port. Leslie's rampart became a gravelled roadway twenty feet wide, for pedestrians only, which Edinburgh citizens used as their "walk" on their way to enjoy the sea breezes on the pier of Leith, that in those days was merely a continuation of the Shore beyond the Old Signal Tower.

By degrees another footpath was formed at the bottom of the mound, and the two became known respectively as the High Walk and the Low Walk, the one being eighteen feet higher than the other. The level of the Low Walk is to be seen at Springfield Cottage above the Alhambra, and also just north of Haddington Place, where the house below the level of the street, once the residence of the Curator of the Botanic Gardens before they were removed to Inverleith, still shows parts of the old boundary wall that ran along the Low Walk. For years Leith Walk was a dreary, unsafe way, with no broad pavements lined with street lamps, and thronged



with foot passengers. Not only was there much risk of falling off the high footpath on to the one below on dark nights, but the long roadway was also beset with footpads.

At Shrubhill was the Gallow Lee, which was excavated to form Leith Walk Railway Station.



THE HIGH AND LOW WALKS.

Here stood the gallows tree, a permanent erection in old days. From it the bodies of notorious criminals, like Chiesly of Dalry, after being dipped in tar, were hung in chains, and swayed eerily to and fro with every gust of wind. Towards

the end of the eighteenth century the Low Walk was raised to the level of the High Walk, and in 1804 the great roadway was causewayed, a toll being erected at Pilrig to defray the expense. The tollkeeper's shelter afterwards became the policeman's box at the end of Albert Street, where its successor has formed a feature in Leith Walk for many years. Leith Walk then developed into the spacious thoroughfare we know it to-day.

## Chapter XXVII.

### LEITH IN THE "KILLING TIMES."

DURING the years of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate, Leith was the headquarters of Cromwell's soldiers in Scotland. East and West Cromwell Streets in North Leith remind us to-day of this long occupation of the town by the English troops, who, Puritans though they were, and therefore associated in our minds with all that is grave and even sour-faced, were not indifferent to the charms and virtues of Leith maids. South Leith Church records and the *Mercurius Politicus*, the newspaper Cromwell's men issued from the Citadel, and the first to be printed in Scotland, show that many of them married and settled in the town. Their skill and industry, added to the enterprise and capital of English merchants who had been encouraged to start business in the town, did much to promote the glass and linen trades established in the Citadel after the Restoration.

During the nine years of English rule Scotland had been better governed than ever she had been under her own kings, but it was English rule, and military at that, and the heavy taxation to which she was subjected to support the English occupation had greatly impoverished the country and heavily handicapped Leith's trade. It was with delight, therefore, that the inhabitants be-

held the English garrisons march away from the Citadel to follow the opportunist Monk to the south to bring about the Restoration, which was celebrated in Leith with all the exuberant joy that marked that event elsewhere throughout the kingdom. The celebrations in Leith began with thanksgiving services in the two parish churches. There was great ringing of bells and flourish of trumpets, with bonfires in the streets and fireworks in the Citadel till past midnight ; for next to their religion the Leith folk loved and revered their ancient line of Stuart kings.

The crown as a decorative feature now became fashionable in honour of the return of the monarchy, and as an emblem of loyalty was much used as an ornament on furniture, especially on chairs. " Crown chairs " are still to be found in old Scots mansions, and in the Picture Gallery at Holyrood at least half the chairs are of this type and date from the Restoration period.

Little did the Leithers foresee they were welcoming to the throne the worst and meanest king who was ever to rule over them. If Cromwell had ruled them with rods, we shall see Charles, even in Leith, ruling the people with scorpions. He soon showed that no faith could be put in his plighted word. All he had promised while wandering in Covenanting company in search of a throne he now turned his back upon, and, by the most sternly repressive measures, sought to crush the Church of Scotland out of existence.

The people of Leith were soon to see this policy in action. Towards the end of December 1660 the English warship *Eagle*, after a fortnight's tempestuous voyage, arrived in Leith Roads from London with a State prisoner of high rank aboard in the person of Montrose's enemy and rival, the Marquis of Argyll, who had

crowned King Charles at Scone in 1650. He was received on the Shore by the water-bailie and his deputy, attended by soldiers with displayed colours. Unlike the great Montrose, he was "tenderly convoyed" towards Edinburgh, and, of all who thronged the streets to see Argyll thus humiliated, none showed him any disrespect. Basely betrayed by the unscrupulous Monk, he was sent to his doom five months later.

The struggle against the doctrine of the divine right of kings to do and rule as they pleased had all to be fought over again. The majority in Leith, as elsewhere in Scotland, chose the side of peace and immunity from persecution by conforming outwardly, at least, to the arbitrary decrees enforcing the Church policy of the Government. How untroubled and full of pleasure the lives of such conformists could be, and how gay a place Leith was, even during the torturings and violent deaths of the "killing time," we see from the account books of Sir John Foulis of Ravelston, the nephew of the Ladie Pilrig, who supplied the heather for the smeechers during the plague.

As we read in Sir John's pages of his visits to the annual horse races on Leith Sands, of his golf matches on the Links, of his going to the play (enacted in all probability in the tennis court at the King's Wark), of his dinners, and "sweeties" and oranges for the bairns at Mrs. Kendall's fashionable tavern in the Kirkgate, and of the refreshments at Hob's village inn at Restalrig, as they drove home in the great family coach, we would never suspect that men were being hunted and shot down among the hills and moors for no other crime than wishing to worship God as their fathers had done. There is not the faintest reflection of such things all through this record Sir John gives us of his daily life

spent in Edinburgh and at Ravelston during this period ; and yet even in Leith, while those who, like Sir John Foulis, conformed to the king's policy in Church matters could and did follow a life of pleasure, men resisted the tyrannous measures of the king and were ready to risk all the penalties the "Bluidy Mackenzie" and his deputy, Sir William Purves of Abbeyhill, one of the elders in South Leith Church, might impose.



LEITH RACES.

*(From a painting in the possession of Mr. D. McQueen, Edinburgh.)*

Among the four hundred ministers driven from their churches for holding that Christ and not King Charles was head of the Church were the minister of North Leith, and Mr. Hogg, the senior minister of South Leith, who escaped being imprisoned by fleeing to Holland, where he spent the rest of his days as minister of a Scots church in Rotterdam. The "outed" ministers began to preach the Gospel in private houses, where many gathered to hear them. The Conventicle Act declared



such meetings illegal, and troops, quartered in the town, went through the streets and closes every Sunday in search of conventicles, and had their zeal in the work stimulated by the knowledge that a Government reward of £50 would be paid for every one they discovered.

Millers have always been noted, both in history and



JUNCTION MILLS AND SITE OF THE ANCIENT LEITH MILLS  
OF THE LOGANS.

tradition, as stout and bold men. Thomas Stark, the miller at Leith Mills, by the waterside opposite Junction Road Station, was no exception to the rule. He was a stalwart supporter of the Covenant. His brother-in-law was the outed minister of Skirling. He went "afield," and held a conventicle, among other places, at Leith Mills in February 1675, when the whole company were arrested by a troop of soldiers under the command of Captain Ogilvie. Fines up to £100 were imposed on

each attender, for in those days of corrupt courts of justice the Government depended on such sources for a large part of its revenue. Despite increased efforts on the part of the Privy Council to suppress them, the number of conventicles increased rather than diminished, and even in Leith and Edinburgh, the headquarters of the Government, it was found impossible to prevent the citizens from attending illegal religious meetings. Increasingly stringent measures were adopted to compel the people to attend the two parish churches, but the conventicles continued nevertheless.

Although none of the great tragic events in this struggle between the king and his Scottish subjects took place in Leith, yet the town was more or less incidentally associated with several of them. The trainbands of Leith and Edinburgh were summoned by tuck of drum to muster on Leith Links and then join Monmouth's forces against the Covenanters at Bothwell Bridge, when the incorporation of carters and the "poor brewers" of Leith had their horses and carts commandeered to form part of the baggage train. The prisoners captured in the battle, after a weary journey, during which none dared befriend them, were interned in the field then known as the Inner Greyfriar Yard, of which the long narrow southern extension of the famous churchyard, now known as the Covenanters' Prison, formed only a small part.

After having been confined in their exposed prison for five months, two hundred and seven of the Covenanters were marched to Leith and put aboard a sailing vessel called the *Crown*, to be carried as slaves to the Plantations. There were sore hearts and streaming eyes among the Leithers as they saw the crowd of staunch but miserable Covenanters hustled through the streets.

The captain of the *Crown*, "a profane, cruel wretch," used them most barbarously, but their sufferings were not to be for long. Their port was nearer than they anticipated, for, as some one has finely said, their sails were set to reach Jerusalem. On a dark and stormy night in December the ship, with her living cargo under closed hatches, was dashed to pieces among the Orkneys, and over two hundred of the wretched prisoners were drowned.

As the weary but undaunted prisoners from the Inner Greyfriar Yard passed down the Easter Road to the Shore of Leith, they might have noticed across the unenclosed fields, as it swung in chains at the Gallow Lee—Leith's place of execution for all except pirates—part of the body of that once fearless fighter, David Hackston of Rathillet, who held the bridge of Bothwell for hours against the royalist troops, and who witnessed, but took no part in, the foul murder of Archbishop Sharp on Magus Moor in 1679. To the Gallow Lee many of the Covenanters were taken to their doom. It was a place of execution less public than the Grass-market, where the farewell speeches of the martyrs deeply moved the crowds that came to see them done to death.

At the Gallow Lee the worst criminals were hung, to add reproach and ignominy to their death. Here, after Hackston's remains had all been pecked away by the kites and crows, five Covenanters were hanged. Their bodies were buried beneath the gibbet, while their heads were spiked above the city gates. But good men and true, among whom was the youthful James Renwick, the last of the martyrs of the Covenant, came in the darkness and silence of night, dug up the headless bodies, and reverently buried them in the West Kirk-yard (St. Cuthbert's). They then boldly took down

the heads from the city gates ; but, daylight overtaking them before they could place these beside the bodies, they buried them beneath two rose trees in a garden near the present Royal Infirmary, where, forty-six years later, they were accidentally discovered and reinterred in Greyfriars' Churchyard beneath the Martyrs' Monument.

From 1679 to 1682 James, Duke of York, the king's brother and heir to the throne, was much in Scotland, where he seemed to divide his leisure between witnessing and encouraging the cruelties of the torturing chamber and playing golf on Leith Links, then one of the chief centres of the game. The Golfer's Land in the Canongate still survives to remind us of his match on the Links with two English noblemen, when, partnered by John Paterson, a member of a noted golfing family, he won the stakes and handed over the money to his partner, who built with it the great tenement which he decorated with his crest—a dexter hand grasping a golf club, with the motto “Far and Sure.”

From this time the persecution became fiercer than ever, and nowhere outside the Netherlands under Alva, could there have been a more complete system of tyranny than that set up for stamping out Presbyterianism. The minister of North Leith, a namesake of the great Reformer, was sent to the Bass Rock, then much used as a State prison for confining outed and disobedient ministers. His successor, like the two ministers of South Leith Church, was an Episcopalian, which would seem to show that the majority of the Sessions and parishioners of both churches, from choice or necessity, more probably the latter, had conformed to Episcopacy. Among the Session members of South Leith who favoured the policy of the king in Church affairs were Lord Bal-

merino, whose action in doing so was contrary to the traditions of his family, which had hitherto been staunchly Presbyterian; Sir Patrick Nisbet of Craigentenny; Sir William Purves of Abbeyhill, who, as assistant public prosecutor, had the odious duty of assisting "Bluidy Mackenzie" in persecuting the Covenanters; William Mylne, son of the King's Master Mason; and Robert Moubray, whose great ancestor, Sir Philip Moubray, held Stirling Castle against Bruce, and whose last descendant in Leith, Mr. Robert Moubray, banker, still remembered by many in the town for his courtliness of manner, died in 1882.

Yet there were still those in Leith who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Among the last to be prosecuted for holding conventicles in the Port was Mr. William Wishart, the outed minister of Kinneil, now the parish of Bo'ness. Mr. Wishart was of the same family as the celebrated George Wishart, the famous martyr of the Reformation period. After having suffered much persecution he had taken up his residence in Leith, where, in 1683, he was seized by a party of soldiers while conducting morning prayers in a private house. Though "ane aged and infirm person, broken and disabled with many diseases," he was cast into the Canongate Tolbooth, which, with its picturesque turrets and projecting clock, forms so attractive an old-world feature in the line of the Canongate to-day. He was sentenced to be banished to the Plantations in the following year. He was, however, conditionally set free under heavy sureties.

But the days of persecution in Leith, as elsewhere in Scotland, were about to close. Charles II. died in 1685. For a time after the succession of James II. the persecution was continued with the utmost cruelty. Then, in 1687, in order to defeat the penal laws against Roman



Catholics, he issued his three letters of Indulgence, allowing freedom of worship to all save those who persisted in attending field conventicles. The outed ministers were now allowed to preach in meeting-houses. In accordance with this "Liberty," as the Leithers were accustomed to call the Declaration of Indulgence, men like Thomas Stark of Leith Mills and Robert Douglas of Coatfield (the most enterprising among the Leith merchants of his time), who were still firm in their loyalty to the Covenant in North and South Leith, formed themselves into a congregation and set up a meeting-house at the Sheriff Brae, where service was conducted by the aged Mr. Wishart, the outed minister of Kinneil, until a clergyman should be appointed.

The "Liberty" also set free Mr. John Knox from the Bass, who, later, was restored to his charge in North Leith. The Sheriff Brae meeting-house proving too small, a larger one, whose title-deeds name it "The Ark," was rented in the Cables Wynd close by, and fitted up by Alexander Mathieson, whose tombstone, until recently cast aside and neglected, has now, from its association with the meeting-house, been placed for preservation within the ground once set apart as a burial-place for the clergy of South Leith Church. Mr. Wishart continued to take the services in the meeting-house until his son had completed his theological studies at Utrecht in Holland, when he became minister to the meeting-house congregation.

On the exile of James II. and the accession of William and Mary the Episcopalian clergy then became "outed," and Mr. Wishart and the meeting-house congregation returned to the old parish church in the Kirkgate. The long conflict between Presbyterianism and Episcopacy came to an end, and the Church of Scotland was

established as it now exists. In later years Mr. Wishart was appointed Principal of Edinburgh University. After David Lindsay he is the most noted among the clergy who have ministered in South Leith.



CABLES WYND, SHOWING "THE ARK."

The old meeting-house still remains, but it is no longer associated with the religious life of the town. Given over to commercial uses, it has for many years formed a store for herring barrels in connection with the fish-curing establishment of Messrs. Davidson and Pirrie in Cables Wynd, where its east gable may be seen

immediately adjoining the pend giving entry to the narrow and gloomy alley designated Meeting-house Green. This name not only keeps alive the memory of the old building as a place of worship, but, at the same time, reminds us of the stretch of grassland that lay between it and the town, for the meeting-house then, and for over a century afterwards, stood on the very outskirts of the town. Gardens and cornfields stretched from it towards the Broughton Burn, which ran in the hollow to the south of Swanfield, to join the Water of Leith near Junction Mills, where douce members of the meeting-house, along with other Leithers of the seventeenth century, when not

“Driving their baws frae whins or tee”

at golf on the Links, were wont to take a turn on the green at the “row-bowlis” at Bowling Green, when they would forget for a time, in the excitement of the game, the troubles of religious strife and persecution.

Meeting-house Green is now but an obscure and insignificant alley. Yet it bears one of the most historic street names we possess, a name that should ever serve to remind us that in the dark and troublous days of the “killing time” the people of Leith did their part in opposing the tyranny of the Stuart rule and in securing for those who came after them that freedom we enjoy to-day. In resisting the oppressive measures of the Stuart kings, the Leithers of those old and troubled times were fighting for something more than the Covenant.

## Chapter XXVIII.

### LEITH CHANGING TO MODERN TIMES.

AT the Restoration Scotland expected that her people would continue to be treated as natives of one kingdom along with Englishmen as they had been under the rule of Cromwell, and that in the matter of home and overseas trade they would continue to enjoy the same rights and privileges as Englishmen. But in this expectation they were to be speedily disappointed. At this time England adopted a system of protective duties in order to foster and develop her industries, and, in carrying out this policy, she treated the Scottish people exactly as she did foreign nations, and excluded their commodities by the same heavy duties she imposed upon those sent from overseas.

France, too, under the administration of the far-seeing Colbert, the brilliant finance minister of Louis XIV., in rivalry of England, entered on a similar policy of protecting her manufactures by the imposition of prohibitory duties against those of Britain. In this way Scotland lost all the trade privileges she had so long enjoyed with her ancient ally. For this the Scots blamed their relationship to England. "The loss of our advantageous privileges with France," they declared, "is one of the great damages we sustained by the Union of the Crowns."

Scotland, of course, immediately retaliated by adopting a similar policy of protection. Up to this time her merchants had been mostly exporters of raw materials, and importers of luxuries and all kinds of manufactured goods. If these latter were to be excluded, it followed that she must now begin to manufacture them for herself. In order to do this with any degree of success the Scots Parliament passed two Acts—one in 1661 and another much more drastic in 1681—forbidding the export of raw materials and the importation of manufactured goods. And now, in addition to the making of soap and some coarse woollens and linens, Leith and Edinburgh, whose trade was all done through the Port of Leith, began to set up other industries in their midst, but not without encountering many difficulties and much opposition.

Among their difficulties was their poverty and consequent want of capital, the lack of skilled workmen, and the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient quantity of the proper kind of raw material, and of purchasing the requisite tools and machines from England and other countries, like France and the Netherlands, much more advanced in manufactures than Scotland. These countries had no desire to aid her to compete with them in supplying the world's markets with manufactured goods. These difficulties seem formidable enough, but they were not all. Not only would Scotland's manufactures be handicapped by high tariffs in finding markets abroad, but, what seems strange to us in our days of unlimited freedom of trade, the merchants of the royal burghs looked upon the manufacturers as interlopers upon their special privileges, and obstructed in many ways the sale of their products.

To obtain the necessary capital men of means were



invited from England and other countries to settle in Scotland as free citizens, and to join their capital to that of Scotsmen in the formation of joint-stock companies like the East India Company and the many joint-stock companies all over the land to-day. To encourage the formation of such companies some, like the wool-card factory and the soap-work at Leith, were granted monopolies for the goods they manufactured, and all had the privilege of importing their raw material and of exporting their finished products free of all customs. When a firm of merchants obtained such privileges their business was called a manufactory. It was, therefore, the ambition of all manufacturing companies to have their business erected into a manufactory. We have an example of this in 1683, in the case of a petition by the partners of a cloth factory in Leith. Wishing to extend their enterprise, they had secured the services of three clothiers (clothworkers) in Leith "excellently well skilled in their trade." Having obtained this skilled labour, they felt justified in asking for all the privileges of a manufactory, and as the Privy Council were doing their utmost at this time to encourage trade the petition was granted.

But the requisite technical skill was not always so easily secured as it was by this firm of Leith cloth manufacturers. Skilled workmen had often to be tempted from abroad with high rates of pay, both to carry on industries and to teach Scotsmen their art. It was in this way that new industries were established in Leith and old ones improved. But these industrial companies and their employees, especially those from abroad, who were greatly disliked by the native workmen, were often much obstructed in their work by the jealous interference of the local trade and merchant guilds. We

have a notable instance of this in Leith in the case of Peter Bruce, an "Ingeneer German," who, like many aliens among us to-day, apparently thought it might pay better to assume a Scottish name than to retain his own.

Bruce set up a playing-card factory in Leith, and, in a way not very honourable to himself, he obtained the monopoly previously granted to some Frenchmen for the manufacture of paper in two mills by the water-side between Leith and Canonmills. This "Ingeneer German" had to contend against constant and malicious opposition in the prosecution of his business, and finally, his two paper mills were deliberately burnt down by some of his enemies. The establishment of manufactures in the Leith district at this time in face of the prejudices and privileges of the merchant and craft guilds was evidently an uphill task, and one which involved considerable financial risk, for insurance against fire was then unknown.

During the later years of this period, between the Restoration and the Union of 1707, Louis XIV. of France was making life bitter for the Huguenots, just as Charles II. and his brother James II. were pitilessly persecuting the Covenanters at home. The result of Louis's policy was that thousands of Huguenots, who were the most skilled and industrious of French workmen, fled to England, and, fortunately for the new-born industries in and around Edinburgh and Leith, part of this great wave of Huguenot emigration overflowed into Scotland, and did much to stimulate manufactures in our neighbourhood, as these French craftsmen taught their Scots fellow-workmen the latest continental methods of manufacture. One of these Huguenots, Pierre de la Motte, settled in Trinity Road, where the last of his French evergreen oaks has only recently been cut down; and all readers of R. L. Stevenson's fascinating romance

of *Catriona* know that the name of Picardy Place preserves the memory of the Huguenot colony of Little Picardy, which settled down here to carry on the manufacture of linen. Many of them had previously endeavoured to introduce the silk manufacture, but



EVERGREEN OAK, TRINITY ROAD.

their mulberry trees refused to mature on Moutree's Hill owing to our less genial climate.

Leith and Edinburgh then became the chief centres of the linen manufacture in Scotland. There was a large factory in the Citadel and another in Leith Wynd beyond the Low Calton, and both had their bleaching greens in the meadows by the waterside at Bonnington. Owing to her proximity to the great Border sheep pastures Leith had always had a large trade in the export of

wool, and, placed as she was on the east coast, no port could have been more favourably situated for importing the finer foreign wools and all dyes and other materials necessary for their manufacture into cloth. Both the Leith and Edinburgh districts, therefore, became leading centres for woollen manufactories, for James Watt had not yet invented the steam-engine which led to the great coal and iron fields of the west becoming Scotland's chief industrial centres.

But the home-grown wool was unfit for any save the coarser kinds of cloth, such as blankets and the hodden grey from which the dress of most Scots was made in olden days. England, France, and the Netherlands jealously forbade the use of their fine wools for any but their own manufactures. Supplies had, therefore, to be imported from Spain and Portugal in return for cargoes of oats, barley, fish, skins, and coarse cloth. But, despite her favourable situation for continental trade, a constant and sufficient supply of this finer wool from the Peninsula was difficult to maintain.

Voyaging in Spanish waters was peculiarly subject to "sea hazards and pyrats," the pirates there being the sea-rovers of Algiers and Sallee, at whose very name wives and mothers of Leith sailormen turned pale. The slow-sailing Leith barques became an easy prey to those "savadge and merciles infidels ye Turkes in Argeirs," as the wife of a Leith mariner of those days described the sea-wolves of the Mediterranean, by whom Leith seamen were so often enslaved. Agents in southern Spain did a regular business in ransoming such unfortunates, and collections in Leith were accustomed to be taken in an endeavour, not always successful, to effect their release, as in 1646, to quote one example, for the crew of David Balfour's ship "who are lying captive

among ye Turks in Argeir"—the old name for Algiers, as one may see on reading Shakespeare's *Tempest*.

Factories for the manufacture of woollen cloth of the finest quality were established in Leith, Leith Wynd, and at Bonnington, which seems to have been quite a hive of industry in the seventeenth century. The factory at Bonnington was originally under the superintendence of seven Flemings, who not only introduced the most up-to-date methods in the production of the finest woollen cloths, but also engaged to teach them to native workmen. In all there were more than fifty business establishments that received the privileges of a manufactory from the State between the Restoration and the Union of 1707, and of these a very considerable number were located in the Leith district, owing to the facilities for trade afforded by the Port.

Leith ships of any size, owing chiefly to the difficulty of obtaining the necessary supply of timber, were still built in Holland, and their equipment of sails, ropes, and cordage had to be imported from the same country, as in the days of James IV. nearly two hundred years before. A beginning was now made in remedying this state of matters by the establishment of a sailcloth factory in Yardheads and of a rope-walk in Newhaven, two industries for which Leith has to-day a world-wide fame. It was now, too, that the sawmill, to which Mill Lane led for so many long years before Junction Street was formed, was founded, with the exclusive right of sawing all timber by machinery, driven, of course, by water power, within a radius of fifteen miles of it. Farther up the Water of Leith was a factory for beaver hats which continued for more than a hundred years, and another for making gunpowder, both of which are commemorated to-day in the names of the dis-



tricts—Beaverhall and Powderhall—in which they were erected.

The funds for the support of King James's Hospital in the Kirkgate had been neither honestly nor wisely administered. Part of the building, in order to help the funds, was let as a "stiffing house"—that is, as a starch factory—while another portion was utilized for the manufacture of "prins" and needles. There was a "sugarie" or sugar-house in the Old Sugar-house or Candle Close in Tolbooth Wynd, and two soap-works were now at work in the town. Evidently the good folk of Leith and Edinburgh were making a beginning at washing every day. The old one in Riddle's Close, under the new management of the Balfour family, now of Pilrig, was in a very flourishing condition, while a new one in the grounds of Coatfield's Lodging did much to contribute to setting up the trade with Archangel.

Its proprietor, Robert Douglas, was a man of much commercial activity and enterprise, and a great promoter of industries in Leith, where he had also established a pottery. The last member of this family to be associated with the Port was Miss Anne Douglas, who died in Trinity in 1910. Then we must not forget the glass-works, of which there were two at this time, the larger in the Citadel and the smaller in Yardheads. In the next century they were to number seven. These were the more important of the industries founded in Leith during this period of progress. They show that Leithers at this time were full of that energy and enterprise which has always characterized the business men of the town, who were then, as now, doing their part in advancing the material well-being of the country.

But England's commercial policy was no less hurtful to Leith's trade than her policy of protecting her home

industries against competition from foreign countries, among which Scotland was included. Under Cromwell's rule Scottish merchants enjoyed equal trading rights with those of England, both with foreign countries and the Plantations, as the Colonies were then called. At the Restoration all this was changed, for England, by her Navigation Act of 1661, declared that no goods were to be imported into, or exported from, the Colonies except in ships belonging to England or the Plantations.

Such a law was quite in accord with the colonial policy of that time, for Scotland had contributed nothing, either in blood or treasure, to the acquisition of the Plantations. But Scotland was anxious to find some market for her linens and woollens and her newly established manufactures. As she was now shut out from English markets, and to a large extent from those of the Continent, both by trade policy and William's French wars, she could only find a market for her goods in the Colonies, where there were no established manufactures. Scotland, however, had no colonies of her own, and she was now shut out from trading with those of England by the Navigation Act.

But Leith's "sugarie" in the Old Sugar-house Close could not carry on without supplies of raw sugar, nor could the hat factory at Beaverhall continue to gratify the demand for beaver hats without a supply of beaver skins for their manufacture. Fortunate was it for Leith, therefore, that the trade regulations of those days were more strict in theory than in practice. For this reason, in spite of the Navigation Act, she was enabled to carry on a considerable trade with the Plantations in woollens, linens, stockings, and other "Scotch goods," as they were then called. This trade was greatly encouraged by the colonists, because the Scottish goods, though

coarser in quality, were cheaper in price than those sent from England.

Another of Leith's exports during this period was "notorious vagabonds," with whom she was kept well supplied from Edinburgh. Strange as it may seem, these "vagabonds" were much prized by the colonists, for despite their designation they made excellent and trustworthy servants. Some of them had, no doubt, been notorious enough, but many were no worse than poor Covenanters and "absenters from the kirk," who, like the two hundred or more prisoners from Greyfriars' Churchyard wrecked in the ill-fated *Crown*, had refused to conform to Episcopacy.

This trade in shipping off prisoners as slaves to the Plantations was a paying business, and English vessels voyaging to America and the West Indies would often come to anchor in Leith Roads and ship as many prisoners as could be had, for the Privy Council was always ready to empty the prisons and "be rid of such vermin." These vessels would then go North-about and continue their voyage to the west. Indeed, so profitable did merchants and skippers find the trade, that people were often kidnapped, a practice made familiar to us by Stevenson's exciting story of the adventures of David Balfour, and by the true story of the life of Peter Williamson, the man who issued the first *Edinburgh Directory* in 1773. As late as 1810 a butcher of North Leith named Leadbitter was imprisoned for kidnapping boys to serve aboard ships voyaging to distant lands.

And so when ships like the *Hopewell* of Leith sailed with a cargo of "Scotch goods" to the Plantations, to return with tobacco and supplies for the sugarie and the factory at Beaverhall, James Graham and Thomas Hamilton, merchants in Edinburgh, her owners, would

“crave the delivery of such idle vagabonds and other persons as may be ready to go to the Plantations.” These unfortunates were generally kindly treated by the planters and were usually set free after a number of years, when they settled down on small plantations of their own. Along with those Scots who now emigrated to the Colonies instead of serving in foreign armies, or wandering as pedlars and traders in Poland, they naturally kept in touch with their own countrymen, and encouraged them to come and trade with them. And in this way Leith vessels continued to sail to the Plantations in spite of every English regulation to keep them out.

The larger ships required to meet the needs of those more distant voyages brought about the first of the many harbour extensions that have been made to accommodate Leith's ever-growing trade. The Shore had been gradually stretching seawards beyond the King's Wark, and in 1677 Robert Mylne, the King's Master Mason, obtained



DOORWAY AND STAIR WINDOW,  
10 SHORE.

a grant of the waste land at the mouth of the harbour on which he erected "for his own use and benefit the great stone tenement upon the Shore of Leith," to quote a family charter. This tenement, now numbered 10 Shore, is still owned by the Mylne family. It possesses a beautifully moulded doorway and stair window, in the pediment of which, within a chaplet of roses, are the initials of its famous builder, R. M., and the date 1678. Here resided Robert Mylne's son William, who was the first of the family to drop the old title of *Master Mason* for the new one of *Architect*. He was one of the supporters of the king's policy of establishing Episcopacy in South Leith Church during the "killing time," as one would expect the son of the King's Master Mason to be.

In 1685 Robert Mylne received another grant of land along the seashore, where he undertook to erect a seawall to resist the encroachment of the waves, and to construct a windmill, leaving between it and the north gable of his tenement a suitable entrance to the adjoining Timber Bush. The great stone tenement, the windmill, and the entrance to the Timber Bush may still be seen on the Shore. The windmill is now the Old Signal Tower used to-day by Messrs. Cran as a part of their works. A portion of the seawall, which Robert Mylne built in 1685 to protect the stores of wood within the Timber Bush from being washed away by the sea, still forms the lower part of the walls of the shacks lining Tower Street, and in them one can easily discern the built-up openings, like embrasures for cannon, through which the timber cargoes floated from the ships were hauled for storage within the Timber Bush.

This windmill built by Robert Mylne at the entrance to the harbour, together with the one at St. Anthony's,



and a third built on the town ramparts near Links Lane behind South Leith Church, must have given a quaint Dutch-like aspect to Leith in those brave days of old in approaching it from the sea. It was from this harbour as reconstructed by Robert Mylne that the Darien Company's expedition sailed away in such high hope in



SIGNAL TOWER AND MYLNE'S LAND, SHORE.

1698, and it is substantially this harbour we see depicted in the old Dutch picture now in the Trinity House.

Scotland, in adopting a policy of protecting her new industries against competing products from England and continental countries, went far to shut her own commodities out of European markets. Leith's illicit trade with the Plantations did not compensate her for the loss of her trade with England, France, and the Netherlands. During King William's wars with France

her commercial intercourse with the Baltic had increased, as that route was safer from the attacks of French war-ships and privateers than those to Holland and Spain and Portugal.

But Scotland, and more especially the Leith and Edinburgh part of it, had become a manufacturing centre, and markets for the disposal of her manufactured goods were urgently needed. Having spent what capital she could gather together in establishing manufactures, she now gave what money she had left to found the Darien Company to settle a colony in Darien, which was to be a great colonial market for the disposal of Scottish manufactures. The maximum amount of stock one could hold in the Darien Company was £3,000, the sum subscribed by the Corporation of Edinburgh, but none of the sixteen Leith shareholders on the list approached this amount. The highest was the share of James Balfour, the ancestor of the Pilrig family and a partner in the soap-works in Riddle's Close and the powder-mills at Powderhall, who subscribed £2,000, while Robert Douglas, his rival in the soap trade, with more Scots caution, put his name down for the modest sum of £100. The Trinity House "adventured" £200, as also did Mr. William Wishart, the minister of South Leith.

And so on a fine day in July 1698 the whole population of Edinburgh and Leith, we are told, poured down upon the pier and sands of Leith to see the five ships, which had been specially built at Amsterdam and Hamburg for the expedition, weigh anchor in Leith Roads, and to cheer loud and long as the vessels hoisted sail and made their way down the Firth. With the second expedition, which sailed in the following year, went as chaplain the Rev. Archibald Stobo, from whose

daughter, Jean, was descended Martha Bulloch, the mother of the late President Roosevelt.

The expeditions, instead of founding a colonial market as an outlet for Scottish manufactured goods, ended in disaster, and brought much sorrow to Leith, for of the nine ships that sailed away only one returned.



LEITH HARBOUR AS EXTENDED BY ROBERT MYLNE IN 1685.

*(From a painting in the Trinity House.)*

The feeling of hatred against King William and the English, and especially against the East India Company, who largely contributed to the failure, and deliberately left the colonists to whatever fate might befall them, was deep and bitter. It soon showed itself in unfriendly and hostile acts that still further inflamed the feeling of enmity between the two countries. After the failure of their great colonial scheme the Darien Company still carried on a shipping trade with the East. This was

strongly resented by the East India Company, who looked upon the countries round the Indian Ocean as their peculiar sphere for trading. They seized and sold the *Annandale*, one of the Darien Company's ships, while another, the *Speedy Return*, had sailed to the East three years before, and, in spite of her name, had not since been heard of.

Just at this time an East Indiaman, the *Worcester*, driven by stress of weather, sought shelter in the Forth. The *Worcester* did not belong to the East India Company, as was supposed at the time, but to a rival company founded in the same year as the Darien Company. Rumours began to get abroad that Captain Green and the crew of the *Worcester* had captured a Scottish ship off the Malabar coast, and had murdered the crew. It was at once concluded that this ship was the *Speedy Return*, and that an overruling Providence had directed Captain Green and his men to the Forth for punishment. The upshot was that Captain Green and two of his crew were tried, and, without a shadow of proof, condemned to be hung as pirates on Leith sands, where the angry population of the two towns crowded to see that they did not escape. If the crew of the *Worcester* had seized any Scottish ship it was not the *Speedy Return*, for that much misnamed vessel, it would seem, eventually found her way back to Leith.

The feeling of enmity deeds such as these stirred up between the two countries was now so strong that any further acts of hostility could only end in war. It was seen that the two countries must either once more become separate kingdoms or be brought into closer union, and have the same rights and privileges. They were wisely guided, and the result was the Act of Union of 1707. The good folk of Edinburgh and Leith were

opposed to the Union, and on 1st May, the day on which the Act came into force, the musical bells of St. Giles', which no longer hang in the steeple, gave sympathetic expression to the feelings of the people by pealing forth the melancholy old Scots tune, "O why should I be sad upon my wedding day?"



A RELIC OF THE OLD LEITH GLASS-HOUSES.



## Chapter XXIX.

### THE TROUBLES THAT FOLLOWED THE UNION.

THE Union of 1707 united the governments of the two countries, but it was unable to unite their peoples, and for many years proved to be as unhappy as the bells of St. Giles' had foreboded. For years Leith and Edinburgh saw nothing but the disadvantages of the Union, which indeed were many. Taxes were much heavier, and were more strictly exacted by the army of English excise and customs officials, who were sent from across the Border to see that the new duties were properly collected. Smuggling had always been a paying occupation in Leith. The soap-works, the glass-works, and the wool-card factory had all suffered much loss through smuggled wares brought in from the Continent. Smuggling now became ever so much more profitable with the introduction of the higher English duties, and was looked on by all classes of the people as a merit rather than a crime.

The Figgate Whins were much resorted to by smugglers, and it was from there that Sir Walter Scott in the *Heart of Midlothian* makes Effie Deans escape in a smuggling lugger. An old seaman from Admiral Vernon's fleet on its return from the siege of Portobello in Darien had settled down here in a small house he had built and named Portobello, after the South American town.

This house stood on the site of the old Town Hall with the projecting clock, just beyond Bath Street, and is said to have been a favourite rendezvous of Leith smugglers. In order to defeat the vigilance of the revenue officers the smuggling luggers constantly changed their appearance, so as not to be recognized by them as a vessel they had had cause to suspect before. They would often, too, pass Leith, as if bound for some port farther up the Firth, and then, after dark, would quietly drop down to the spot where the cargo was to be run ashore.

But the Union brought other and greater evils than heavy taxes to Leith and Edinburgh. Their streets were no longer thronged as they had been with the members of the Scots Parliament, lords and commoners, and all the nobles and rich people of the land, who were wont to bring both gaiety and business to the two towns. For many years after the Union the loss of trade from this cause was bitterly lamented by the merchants. The commercial classes of both towns had expected that the freedom of trade with England and the Colonies, granted by the Union, and for which they had so long clamoured, would lead to immediate prosperity. But it did not do so. The trade in tobacco with the Plantations after the Union certainly began the fortunes of Glasgow, but in Leith and Edinburgh, where so many new industries had arisen, the Union brought with it a loss, rather than a gain, in trade.

This was foreseen by many, and is not difficult to account for. In the first place, whatever trade Leith still had with France was lost to her by the Union and our many wars with that country during the eighteenth century. Then England had for centuries been a manufacturing country, and her products were both cheaper

and of much finer quality than those of Leith and Edinburgh. The result was that immediately the Union was accomplished English merchants flooded Scotland's markets with their better and cheaper wares, and our local industries naturally began to decline. This was especially true of the woollen manufacture which had been set up in Leith, Bonnington, and Paul's Wark in Leith Wynd.

Unable to compete with England in the production of the finer qualities of cloth, these factories once more reverted to the manufacture of the plaidings, blankets, and the other coarse woollens of former days; but factories that did not thus adapt themselves to the new conditions brought about by the Union had to close down. To encourage the woollen cloth trade it was enacted in 1707, just as it had been in England in 1678, that, in all time coming, dead bodies were to be buried in plain woollen cloth. The linen trade, the most important in Leith and Edinburgh all through the eighteenth century, also became depressed, and from this cause and the decline in the woollen trade, the wool-card factory which had flourished in Leith for over half a century had rather a bad time until both trades began to revive again. The folk of Leith and Edinburgh, therefore, had good cause to lament the Union, to which they ascribed all their ills, for during the first half of the eighteenth century trade and commerce languished rather than flourished.

Everybody had expected that when Queen Anne died in 1714 the Pretender would succeed as James VIII.; but the Whigs had been too clever for the Jacobites, who, beaten in statecraft, resolved to try force of arms. In such incidents as the ships in Leith Roads hoisting their ensign on the Pretender's birthday they saw ardent sympathy with their cause, when it was nothing more

than a harmless way of showing resentment against England. The Earl of Mar, the Jacobite leader in the 'Fifteen, left London for the north disguised as a workman under the name of Maule, in a small coal sloop of only a few tons burden, owned and commanded by John Spence, a Leith skipper. Spence landed Mar at Elie, and, when his standard of rebellion had been unfurled, Mar detached Brigadier Mackintosh with 2,500 men to cross the Forth and aid the English rebels of Northumberland.

Mackintosh, a bold and resolute commander, successfully accomplished this in spite of the English fleet in the Forth. Elated with his success, Mackintosh made a dash on Edinburgh, but as he and his weary men reached Jock's Lodge, Argyll with the king's forces entered the city, and Mackintosh and his men then turned aside to Leith, where they took up a strong position in the Citadel. The following night, however, after dark, Mackintosh evacuated the Citadel, and, leading his men along the beach at low water, he crossed the mouth of the harbour, the water only reaching to the men's knees, and then marched away to the Border. He had achieved nothing by his raid on the Port, for, however much the Leithers had good cause to dislike the Union, they had no desire to destroy it by force.

By the fifteenth article of the Treaty of Union it was stipulated that the capital lost by the Darien venture was to be repaid, with five per cent. interest up to date. Although it was only gradually that this money seemed to become available for purposes of trade, it was, nevertheless, a great boon in this time of industrial depression. Its beneficial effect in doing something to bring about progress and prosperity in the country may be inferred from the way in which the repayment of the

capital lost by the Darien Company influenced the fortunes of the Balfours of Pilrig, whose ownership of their estate has close association with the story of the ill-fated Darien Company.

James Balfour, who lived in Milne's Court, Lawnmarket, was a burgess and a guild brother and carried on business in Leith. Along with other partners he owned the powder-mills at Powderhall, glass-works and a shipbuilding yard in North Leith, and the soap-works in Riddle's Close. He was also one of the directors of the Darien Company, and was involved in its ruin. The receipts for his shares are still preserved in the old iron family treasure chest, which, according to a tradition with no basis of truth behind it, had belonged to a galleon of the Spanish Armada. Balfour's losses completely crushed him, for he seems to have died of a broken heart. His eldest son James, wisely guided by his widowed mother, Helen Smith, a niece of the heroine of the Morocco Land in the Canongate, did his best to pay his father's debts and to save some part, at least, of his business. Then, taking to himself a wife, he left the aristocratic precincts of Milne's Court, and set up house in a dwelling belonging to the soap-work in Riddle's Close. At that time, strange as it may seem to us now, this was quite a fashionable residential quarter of Old Leith in spite of the soap-work at its junction with St. Andrew Street, then known as the Dub Raw, a corruption of its former French name of "Les Deux Bras" (The Two Arms)—a relic of the days of Mary of Guise—because of the two alleys, the Sheep-head Wynd and St. Leonard's Lane, the Peat Neuk of post-Reformation times, into which it branched after passing the Vaults.

In 1719 the capital lost by the Darien Company was



repaid, and young Balfour found himself suddenly rich. With his new-found wealth he purchased the estate of Pilrig, with its quaintly gabled mansion, its wooded park, its lawn with the three old holly trees, its great garden with its wealth of old Scots flowers, its meadows and its cornfields, through which, with winding silvery



PILRIG HOUSE.

stream, flowed the waters of the Broughton Burn to form a ford, where they crossed the Bonnington Road between Silverfield and Swanfield, on their way to join the Water of Leith. James Balfour's son, the Laird of Pilrig made so familiar to us by Robert Louis Stevenson in *Catriona*, would stroll on summer evenings through pleasant field byways to Bowling Green House to woo

the lovely Cecilia Elphinstone. Here, in the garden overlooking the weir that sent the mill lade racing to Leith Mills, she would sit sewing her silken seam in those good old-fashioned days when every girl was accustomed to make her own trousseau.

Pilrig House, as its almost indecipherable lintel tells us, was built in 1638 by Gilbert Kirkwood, the wealthy goldsmith, who was a victim of the terrible plague of 1645. Kirkwood's picturesque old mansion, the present Pilrig House, succeeded the old peel tower of the Monypennys erected at some time during the fifteenth century. Built on the ridge here, this peel must have been a conspicuous object in the landscape. To their old tower we owe the name Pilrig (the peel on the ridge). St. Cuthbert's, in the old pre-Reformation days, had been the church of the Monypennys; but the Balfours worshipped in South Leith. In its churchyard, in that portion of it set aside for the gentlemen traffickers, they were buried. The family tombstone there, setting forth the virtues, as *Catriona* has proclaimed the fame, of the second Laird of Pilrig, must have been well known to his descendant, Robert Louis Stevenson, to whom a fine specimen of the sculptor's art in the maltmen's ground immediately adjacent may have suggested the name of that uncanny villain, blind Pew, in *Treasure Island*.

Between the 'Fifteen and the Jacobite rising of 1745 was a period of trade depression, and consequent gloom and discontent, largely brought about by the Union. This spirit sometimes showed itself in open defiance of the Government, as it did in the Porteous Riots in 1736. Despite their unfriendly feeling to King George and his ministers, however, the Leithers were filled with dread on the approach of Bonnie Prince Charlie and his wild



EASTER ROAD,  
showing the old Leith and Edinburgh Stage Coaches.

Highlanders at the 'Forty-five—a dread which became consternation when they saw Hamilton's panic-stricken dragoons, scared at Coltbridge by the advanced guard of the Prince's army, come pouring into the town, and pass, with a clatter of hoofs, over the old stone bridge at the Brigend, on their way to the Citadel.

Feeling themselves unsafe even behind the defences of this stronghold, these doughty warriors immediately took to their heels again, and hardly drew rein until they had joined Cope at Dunbar. After the Battle of Prestonpans the old custom-house in the Tolbooth Wynd was despoiled of its goods by the Highlanders. These were immediately turned into money by being sold to the smugglers from whom they had been captured. Some thirty of the Leithers donned the white cockade, and, after assisting the Highlanders to seize all the horses, corn, and hay in the old stage-coach stables, enlisted under the Prince's banner. At this time there were two stage coaches, with three horses, a driver, and postilion each, running between Leith and Edinburgh. They took a whole hour to accomplish the journey, as the road—the Easter Road—was such that they could only travel at a walking pace. These were the only regular stage coaches at this time in Scotland.

The most notable recruits to join the banner of Bonnie Prince Charlie from the Leith district were the last Lord Balmerino and John Hay of Restalrig. Hay acted first as treasurer to the Prince, and later as secretary. Lord George Murray always attributed the disastrous defeat of the Highlanders at Culloden to his neglect in provisioning the army. Hay lived in exile with the Prince until 1771. He then returned to Edinburgh, as there was now no thought on the part of the Government of prosecuting him for his share in

the 'Forty-five. He died in 1784, and was buried beside his wife in the family vault which abuts on the Well of St. Triduana in Restalrig Churchyard.

The estates of Lord Balmerino and Hay of Restalrig were forfeited after the Rebellion. Those of Lord Balmerino were bought by his nephew, the Earl of Moray, in whose family they still remain. Hay's estate of Restalrig, on which his mansion has given place to the present Restalrig House, now St. Mary's Catholic Home, became the property of Mr. Ronald Crauford, and through his granddaughter passed into the possession of the Bute family, who were always favourites with George III., and, therefore, strongly opposed to the Jacobites. Miss Hay, daughter of John Hay of Restalrig, who had come into possession of that estate by his marriage with Anne, daughter of James Elphinstone, one of the Balmerino family, lived to a great age. On her deathbed in 1814 it was her earnest wish to be buried beside her beloved father and mother in the family vault at Restalrig; but this dying request the Marquis of Bute refused to grant. Miss Hay, as her great recumbent tombstone tells us, was therefore interred immediately outside the vault, to be as near as possible to the cherished spot where her parents were buried.

Lord Balmerino, who had been "out" in the 'Fifteen, was a staunch believer in divine right, in spite of all that his family had suffered from the tyranny of the Stuarts. He joined the Prince at Holyrood, and became one of the commanders of his Life Guards. He was a man of the most engaging charm of manner. His brother, the fifth Lord Balmerino, was the last to live in the old mansion off the Kirkgate, where he died in January 1746. At his execution on Tower Hill in August 1746, Lord Balmerino's gallant bearing won the reluc-



tant respect and admiration of the beholders. He was the last of a family that had experienced many changes of fortune, for two Lords Balmerino had been condemned to death before him ; but only in his case was the sentence carried into execution. The old mansion in the Kirkgate, though still retaining its historic name, then became the home of strangers. Since 1848 it has been the property of the Catholic Bishop of Edinburgh, and within its grounds in 1853 was built the Catholic church of " Our Lady, Star of the Sea."

While the Prince's army occupied Edinburgh a Highland guard was kept stationed on the Shore to prevent men being landed from the warships in the Firth. To one of these, the *Fox* sloop of war, was delegated the special duty of protecting the Port, but Leith had more reason to dread the action of the Government officers than to fear any harm from the Highland army, for, while some regiments of the latter were at drill on the Links, which then lay open to the sea, the *Fox* is said to have opened fire upon them, thus threatening destruction to friend as well as foe.

The recruits from Leith who joined the Prince's forces were all from the lower orders save Lord Balmerino and Sir David Murray of Stanhope, who was not a native of the town. The insignificance in rank and numbers of these recruits leads us to conclude that the Leith folks had no desire to help Bonnie Prince Charlie in his gallant attempt to win back the crown of his ancestors. Yet they did nothing to oppose him, for, though the tyranny of the "killing time" had estranged their once deep affection for the Stuarts, they had no love for the House of Hanover. The trade depression that followed the Union had caused such hatred of England as made the Leithers feel that, if they were

to continue to be ruled from London, it was a matter of indifference to them whether it was done under a Stuart or a Hanoverian sovereign.

Yet there was one hotbed of Jacobite sentiment in their midst. This was the Episcopalian Church, and more especially those among its members who refused to transfer their allegiance to the foreign kings who succeeded the Stuarts on the throne. On the accession of William of Orange to the throne, the Presbyterian Church once more became the State Church in Scotland. The Episcopalians, as we have already seen, now became "outed," and the Presbyterians from Meeting-house Green returned to their old parish churches of St. Mary and St. Ninian. The Episcopalians who took the oath of allegiance to the new king were allowed to hold their services undisturbed in licensed or "qualified" chapels, to give them their legal designation, which, like "The Ark" in Cables Wynd, differed little in outward appearance from ordinary dwelling-houses. But those Episcopalians whose feelings of loyalty to the House of Stuart would not allow them to transfer their allegiance to King William, and for this reason were known as Nonjurors, were forbidden by law to hold their services even in meeting-houses, and could only worship secretly in private houses. In less than twenty years after the 'Forty-five, however, the penal laws against the Nonjurors had fallen into abeyance, when they too, like their co-religionists who had sworn allegiance to the reigning sovereign, were allowed to worship publicly in meeting-houses.

One of the meeting-houses of the nonjuring Episcopalians gave its name to Chapel Lane, off Quality Street. The decorated door lintel of this old meeting-house, now built into a tenement hard by, is pictured on next page.

The pious legend which the deep religious feeling of the Reformation period had caused to be inscribed on this lintel, has been copied as a motto over the doorway of St. James's Parsonage in John's Place. With this non-juring congregation, we may be sure, were connected most of the men from Leith who joined the Prince's army. The clergyman of this congregation at the time of the 'Forty-five was the Rev. Robert Forbes, who was an ardent Jacobite. He afterwards became Bishop of Ross and Caithness, but at the same time continued to



SCULPTURED LINTEL, CARPET LANE.

hold his charge in Leith, until his death in 1775, when he was buried in the Maltmen's Aisle, beneath the organ loft, in South Leith Church.

Mr. Forbes, along with Mr. Stuart Carmichael, linen manufacturer, Bonnyhaugh, behind Bonnington Mill, started off to join Prince Charlie on his arrival in the Highlands. Luckily for them they were both arrested, and remained prisoners in Edinburgh Castle until after the Cause of the White Rose was finally lost at Culloden. They thus escaped the fate of the two Leithers who were executed for their share in the rebellion, Lord Balmerino, and James Nicholson who owned a coffee-house, as

fashionable restaurants were then called. On being released, Mr. Forbes went to reside with Lady Bruce of Kinross, a wealthy member of his congregation, and a strong Jacobite. Lady Bruce's mansion was in the Citadel, then a fashionable suburb for the nobility and gentry. Her house was in all probability the one which a Leith tradition used to associate with the name of Cromwell, despite the fact that General Monk did not



CROMWELL HOUSE, CITADEL, NOW REMOVED.

begin the construction of the Citadel until several years after Cromwell had left Scotland for good.

Flora Macdonald, her kinsman Macdonald of Kingsburgh, and all like them who had in any way succoured Prince Charlie or fought in his cause, were always welcome guests at Lady Bruce's, and at the house of James Macdonald, who was sib to the Laird of Raasay and dwelt on the Coalhill, a street whose line of ancient houses with their mingled stone and timber fronts, like the ghosts by which so many of them were haunted in later days, has long since disappeared. The Prince

escaped to France at the end of September 1746, but, as this was unknown to the Government until some time afterwards, they continued their search for him with unabated persistence. It was rumoured that the fugitive was making his way south. The Government officers thought that he might even find his way to Leith in the darkness of night, as some Jacobites had succeeded in doing, in hope of finding a ship for France. As Lady Bruce's mansion was a known resort of Jacobites, it was suddenly surrounded by the military on a quiet Sunday morning, a week after Prince Charlie's escape. The soldiers threatened to shoot any one who dared to stir from the house, and, stimulated by hopes of a large reward, left no nook or corner unsearched, even looking under the very cabbages in the garden. They failed, of course, to find the Prince, who arrived safely in France the following day.

Meanwhile the heroic Flora Macdonald had been arrested for her share in aiding the Prince's escape, and was at this very time a prisoner aboard the frigate *Bridge-water*, in Leith Roads, where she remained for two months. Flora had spent three years at school in Edinburgh. During that period she had been a frequent visitor at Lady Bruce's, and had made many friends in Leith among Jacobite ladies like Miss Crawford of Redbraes, whose modest manor-house still stands near Bonnington Toll, and the charming Mally Clerk, a general favourite with Prince Charlie's officers while in Edinburgh. "Make my compliments to Lady Bruce and Mr. Clerk's family, and especially to Miss Mally," wrote that gallant Jacobite cavalier, Major Macdonald of Tiendrish, in Inverness-shire, who is said to be the original of Sir Walter Scott's Fergus MacIvor in *Waverley*. Although Flora was never once allowed ashore, her many friends in Edin-



burgh and Leith on visiting her aboard the *Bridgewater* were most hospitably entertained by both officers and crew, who treated Flora rather as a distinguished guest than as a prisoner.

When the *Bridgewater* weighed anchor for the Thames, to carry "the bonnie young Flora" to her trial in London, large crowds gathered on the pier and sands to cheer the fair prisoner on her departure, while the buildings in the town and the ships in the harbour and roadstead were gay with flags in her honour. On her release in the following year Flora was welcomed once more at the Citadel on her way home to Skye, and spent at least one happy night at Lady Bruce's among her loved friends in Leith, each adorned, one hardly doubts, with "bonnie breist-knots" from the Jacobite rose-bushes that still flourish so luxuriantly in old Scots gardens like those of the Grange and Pilrig, although the Balfours, as readers of *Catriona* do not need to be reminded, were staunch Whigs.

The print gown which the Prince had worn in the character of Betty Burke when, by the ingenuity of the heroic Flora, he escaped "over the sea to Skye," had been preserved as a precious relic. After his visit to the Citadel on his release from Edinburgh Castle, Macdonald of Kingsburgh sent a portion of the print of which the gown had been made to Mr. Stuart Carmichael, the Jacobite linen manufacturer at Bonnyhaugh, the land between the Water of Leith and the mill lade now occupied by Bonnington skin works. Mr. Carmichael had print made of a pattern exactly similar, and so great was the demand for this cloth among the "loyal" ladies of Scotland and England that the linen mills at Bonnington could by no means keep pace with it.

A piece of this print with other small relics of Prince

Charlie, such as part of his blue velvet garters, which had been entrusted to the care of Lady Bruce while Flora Macdonald was a prisoner, may be seen attached to the cover of the third volume of the *Lyon in Mourning*, which is always on exhibition in the lower Parliament Hall behind St. Giles' Church. The *Lyon in Mourning*, which was perhaps so called "in allusion to the woe of Scotland for her exiled race of princes"—the Lyon being the heraldic emblem of the nation—is a collection of manuscripts in ten volumes written by Bishop Forbes from journals, letters, and narratives relating to the life of Bonnie Prince Charlie during and after the rebellion of 1745. Two other manuscript volumes written by Bishop Forbes, his registers of baptisms and marriages, are among the most treasured possessions of St. James's Episcopal Church. In these two volumes we are introduced to many families among the Nonjurors during the good Bishop's ministry in Leith.

Long before the death of Prince Charlie in 1788 the Jacobite cause had become utterly hopeless. After that event the Nonjurors gave in their allegiance to George III., and early in the nineteenth century, a union took place between those in Leith, who always seem to have dedicated their meeting-house to St. James the Apostle, and the Episcopalian congregation that had continued steadfast in its loyalty to the Government. The united congregation, in 1805, built St. James's Chapel in Constitution Street, opposite South Leith Churchyard. This chapel now forms part of a wool-store from which, however, it is still, architecturally, quite distinct. In 1863 the congregation moved farther down the street to the present St. James's Church, built from funds largely gifted by the Wood family, who are still numbered among its members, and whose finely

equipped sailing-ships in days of yore used to make so brave a show as they cleared the old harbour to voyage to the Greenland whale-fishing.

The disturbing effect of the 'Forty-five on the trade of Leith was very great. The banks, of which there were four in Edinburgh but none in Leith at this time, removed their cash and other valuables into the Castle for safety. How greatly this crippled trade we may judge by its effect on the South Leith Roperie, which amalgamated in 1750 with one in North Leith, founded there after the failure of the Newhaven rope-walk, to form the huge business established in Bath Street known to-day as the Edinburgh Roperie and Sailcloth Company.

Throughout the greater part of the period during which the rebellion lasted, the South Leith Roperie Company had the utmost difficulty in keeping their business going. The banks being closed, the company were unable to pay for the cargoes of flax imported from St. Petersburg to keep their mills working, and had not their business correspondents in London and Amsterdam come to their aid, the firm must have collapsed. At the close of the year 1745, when the annual balance was struck, it was found that the company had a loss on the year's working of £240.

It is interesting to note, in connection with inquiries by Jacobites, like Secretary Murray, about ships voyaging from Leith to the Continent, that the Government warrant for the arrest of Alan Breck Stewart, who plays so great a part in Stevenson's fascinating stories of *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*, is still preserved in the Custom-house, Leith.

## Chapter XXX.

### PROGRESS BEGINS IN LEITH.

THE 'Forty-five proved to be the end of civil strife in our country, for, whatever wars Britain might wage abroad, the people were determined to have settled and ordered government at home. In no other way could trade flourish and progress be made. From the period of the 'Forty-five, then, a wonderful change came over Scotland. Instead of nursing her wrongs as she had hitherto done, she now began to realize, and to take advantage of, the many benefits and opportunities the Union had really put in her way. The two peoples did not love each other any the more. The notorious John Wilkes, a few years after this time, stirred up in the hearts of Londoners strong feelings of hatred and contempt against all Scotsmen for the share the Marquis of Bute had in the unpopular Treaty of Paris which closed the Seven Years' War. Every year as the king or queen's birthday came round, almost right down to the close of Queen Victoria's reign, the Leithers, at first from revenge and later from custom, would burn John Wilkes in effigy under the name of *Wully Wulks*, because they had really forgotten who he was.

Up to this time Leith had practically not grown beyond her mediæval bounds. Farming was still an

important occupation of its inhabitants. Fields of pease, oats, and barley occupied all the land between St. Anthony's Port and the Netherbow. In Easter Road still stand the farm-house and steading of Lower Quarry Holes, whose tenant, Robert Douglas of Coatfield, in 1730, like so many indwellers of Leith, under the name of maltman combined the vocations of farming and brewing, and was a member of the Burlaw Court, which met in the Doocot Park beside the Links. But just after the period of the 'Forty-five a change began to show itself in the landscape viewed from Leith. Turnips, soon to be followed by potatoes, now became a field crop. To protect these crops from the wandering cattle the fields had to be enclosed by dikes and hedgerows.

Farmers had no longer to slaughter their cattle for lack of winter food for them after the stubble fields had been eaten bare. They could now be fed on turnips. Salt meat, varied with pigeon pie, then ceased to be the winter fare of the people of Leith, as it had been for centuries; and the dovecots in the gables of the houses, around which pigeons were ever cooing and fluttering, now became silent and untenanted, and were put to other uses. A few of these old dovecot gables, with their alighting ledges and entrance holes for the birds, yet survive in Leith, as at 32 Shore, and remind us of the days when food was less plentiful than with us now, and pigeons had to be kept to eke out, and to add variety to, the winter supply.

Leith now began to advance with steady progress, and has continued to do so down to the present time; for although Britain was almost constantly engaged in wars on the Continent during the second half of the eighteenth century, these did not injure Leith's trade



to anything like the extent that England's wars with France and Holland had done during the century before. Then Leith's overseas commerce was almost her only trade, but now, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, she had many home industries as well as foreign trade. The raw material for her manufactures she imported mostly from the Baltic—a trade route on which Leith vessels were not likely to encounter so many of the enemy's warships and privateers as in the days when her commerce was chiefly with the Netherlands. Furthermore, throughout the long French war the Government, at the suggestion of the Leith and Edinburgh merchants, among whom Mr. Gladstone's grandfather took the lead, encouraged neutral vessels to bring in cargoes of raw material necessary for our home industries even from enemy countries, a policy by which the linen factories of Edinburgh and the Leith sail-cloth works and rope-walks were enabled to carry on all through the war.

During the first twenty-five years after the 'Forty-five Leith's shipping trade increased sevenfold. That was due to several causes, one of which was that new industries, like the oil-works of Messrs. P. and C. Wood and the new sugar-house in Water Street, were constantly being founded, and old ones, like the glass-works and the shipbuilding yards, being further extended and developed. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the glass-works had increased from two to seven.

This noteworthy industrial and commercial expansion was due mostly to two factors, without whose aid it could not have taken place; the one was the rise and development of banks, and the other was the Turnpike Road Act of 1751. The first of the great banking companies to open a branch in Leith was the British Linen

Company, which, as its name indicates and as its more recent note issues show, was first founded as a linen company, and then forsook trading in linen to take up banking; but the Leith Banking Company had already built and established itself in the neat little domed building in Bernard Street, now occupied by the National



NOTE OF THE LEITH BANKING COMPANY.

Bank. It failed in 1842, and had to close its doors. It was followed by the Edinburgh and Leith Banking Company, a very wealthy corporation, now merged in the Clydesdale Bank. Money was very scarce in Edinburgh and Leith in the eighteenth century. To the credit system of these banks, by which Leith merchants were able to finance their transactions, is largely due the position of the Port in the world of commerce to-day.

When we read in Macaulay's glowing pages of the adventures and mishaps of travellers like the restless and gossipy Pepys while journeying along the wretched English roads of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we seldom realize that the very same experiences were being met with on the sorry tracks that passed for roads around Leith during the same period. When Sir John Foulis and his friends drove in his great lumbering coach from Ravelston to the horse-races on Leith Sands, they considered themselves lucky indeed if they arrived home again without the carriage sticking fast in some hole, or, worse still, breaking an axle. Axle-trees are frequent items of expense in the old account books of the Laird of Ravelston.

When this old Scots laird sent one of his estate carts to Leith, perhaps to the Vaults, to have the wine cellar at Ravelston replenished, he had always to count upon so many of the bottles being broken and their contents lost owing to the constant jolts from holes and ruts. Thus in January 1700 four bottles of brandy out of three dozen were lost in this way. Goods had accordingly to be carried in small loads on the backs of horses, just as had been done in mediæval times. Trade could never expand so long as such conditions prevailed, because each district had to be more or less self-sufficing, and provide for its own needs. But all this was changed in 1751 by the Turnpike Road Act, which, next to railways and the steam-engine, has done most to promote Scotland's trade.

A turnpike was a tollgate or tollbar set across a road to hold up carts and carriages until the toll for the upkeep of the road was paid. From this tax, what had before been impassable tracks now were made excellent roads, opening up communication with every district,

and enabling carts with many times the load of a pack-horse to pass along with ease. By the Turnpike Road Act Leith's trade area was largely extended, and this had much to do with the wonderful expansion in her shipping trade in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Let us illustrate this expansion due to better



BONNINGTON TOLL-HOUSE.

roads by one example. In 1779 a Leith wholesale grocer, Mr. Charles Cowan, carrying on business in the Tolbooth Wynd in the shop now occupied by Messrs. Buchan and Johnston, removed to Penicuik, and began papermaking in mills which have since grown to be among the largest in the world. Their export and import trade was done through Leith owing to the improved roads, as it is so largely done to-day, and by the same means.

It was only after the Turnpike Road Act came into force that travelling began to be common, because it could now be done with comparative ease and comfort. Down to the middle of the eighteenth century, save an occasional coach to London at long and irregular intervals, the only stage coaches in Scotland were the two huge clumsy-looking vehicles that ran between Leith and Edinburgh by the Easter Road. Stage coaches now



CHAIN PIER FROM WARDIE.

began to travel regularly on all the main roads, and, in connection with these, ferry and passenger boats ran at regular and stated times to the various ports on the Forth, from Leith and Newhaven, and later, when steam-packets came into use, from the Chain Pier just beyond Newhaven, which was erected in 1821. With the introduction of railways most of the steamers plying up and down the Forth disappeared, and the ferry boats from Newhaven were transferred to Granton.



Besides the stage coaches supplying the needs of the passenger traffic on the Forth, there were the royal mail coaches, which carried the mails as well as passengers. Many of the coaches started from the Black Bull Hotel, Leith Street, a building in which is now housed the confectionery establishment of Messrs. Duncan. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, coaching's prime age, it was a brave sight, on a summer morning, to see the stage coach for Perth and the North, with its four spanking horses, leave the Black Bull for the ferry boat at Newhaven, the guard in red coat and beaver hat tooting melodiously on his long horn as the horses set off down Leith Street. Swinging round into Broughton Street, they were wont to go down the hill in dashing style, the outside passengers steadying themselves by clutching the guard irons as coach and horses careered down the steep descent towards Newhaven.

But the days of the stage coach were numbered. A rival was about to enter into competition with it for the passenger traffic of the country. This was the locomotive engine. While George Stephenson was constructing his *Rocket*, an ingenious Leith resident, Timothy Burstall by name, engineer at Leith Sawmills above Junction Bridge, was building his engine, the *Perseverance*. Burstall took the *Perseverance* to Manchester in 1829 to compete against Stephenson's *Rocket* for the prize of £500 offered by the Liverpool and Manchester Railway Company. The *Perseverance* failed to carry off the prize, but it was highly commended. Railways now began to spread over the land. The Edinburgh, Leith, and Granton Railway was opened in 1848, and the stage coach ere long became one of the things that had been.

To the passenger traffic from the Shore we owe the

old Leith inns—the Britannia, the Old Ship, and the New Ship. The Old Ship Hotel, built in 1676, was burned down in 1888, but was rebuilt, and is the only one of the three still open to-day. The carved stones of the old building, together with its ancient sign, adorn its present-day successor. It was in front of the “Old Ship,” as an inscription plate in the quay wall reminds us, that George IV. landed in Scotland in 1822. The doorway of the New Ship Inn is shown, exactly as it is to-day, in the old picture of the harbour in the Trinity House.

Perhaps the most fashionable Leith tavern during the latter half of the eighteenth century was Straiton’s in the Kirkgate, opposite Laurie Street. The Kirkgate, which we may call the High Street of Old Leith, was not then the comparatively broad street it is to-day, but was still the narrow alley the defensive needs of mediæval times had made it. Its high-peaked gables and numerous timber fronts jutting over the dingy booths or shops beneath gave this street all that picturesque variety of outline so dear to our forefathers

“Of the old days, and the old ways,  
And the world as it used to be.”

Laurie Street was still unbuilt. On its site grew a line of shady elms, while harvest-fields stretched to the links, and on the south joined those of Quarryholes farm and Pilrig. As it stood in close proximity to the Links, Straiton’s Inn was a favourite resort of golfers. It was here, in all likelihood, that the strange yet merry dinner and ball described in Smollett’s *Humphry Clinker* were held.

Straiton’s always housed a gay and aristocratic crowd during the week of the Edinburgh Race Meeting, which

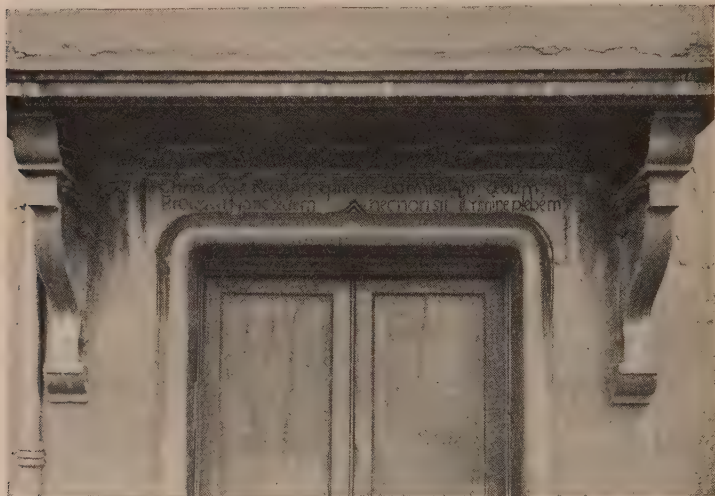
was held annually on Leith Sands, then, strange as it may seem, the most popular race-course in Scotland. These races are usually said to date from the Restoration period, but Leith was noted both for inns and horse-races centuries before then. In the Lord High Treasurer's accounts for the reign of James IV., entries like the following may be read: "To the wife of the king's inn, and to the boy that ran the king's horse at Leith, xxviii s." Sometimes this horse was King James's favourite steed, Grey Gretno. In 1816 the Race Meeting was transferred to Musselburgh, where it has been held ever since.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries much fancy was displayed in the decoration of doorways when the rest of the building was left unadorned. Several interesting specimens are to be found on the Shore. There is the doorway to Mylne's Land; another with a highly intricate monogram and the date 1711 that must have given entrance to the King's Wark; and the doorway to the New Ship Inn. Over this doorway, in Latin, is inscribed a verse from the 121st Psalm, most ingeniously adapted, by the alteration of a word, to the calling of the house—"He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth *the house* shall neither slumber nor sleep." The introduction of railways made Edinburgh the chief place in our district for the arrival and departure of travellers, and then the old-fashioned hostelrys on the Shore were forsaken for the palatial hotels that arose in Princes Street.

For centuries, as has been seen, Leith was the principal gateway into and out of the country. Within the last century Glasgow has, of course, become the largest port in Scotland. But while Glasgow has, almost mushroom-like, grown to be the greatest Scottish port and the centre of the vast trade with the American continent, Leith

has maintained its position as the principal channel for the trade and commerce of this country and the northern parts of Ireland with the various countries bordering the North Sea, as well as with the numerous ports located on the Baltic and White Seas.

As has been seen, a great increase in the traffic passing through Leith took place in the second half of



DOORWAY OF NEW SHIP INN.

the eighteenth century. In 1763 the shore dues collected upon the goods landed and shipped amounted to £580. Within twenty years this had increased as nearly as possible sevenfold. The monetary value of the trade of Leith in 1784 was estimated at £495,000, carried on by forty different traders or companies. The more important commodities dealt in were grain, flax, hemp, wood, tar, iron, and food-stuffs; while the manufactures included ropes, canvas, soap, and candles. It is officially

recorded that in 1794 the number of vessels belonging to the Port of Leith was 144, of an aggregate tonnage of 15,504, the men forming the crews numbering 854. Compared with the figures pertaining to more recent times these seem insignificant. Thus the tonnage of Leith's ships at the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 was 254,082. And even these figures are far from indicating the increase in Leith's shipping facilities, for as each steamship makes several voyages to every one of a sailing vessel the latter figure ought to be multiplied six or even more times to give a true comparison.

Up to the close of the eighteenth century much of the commerce of Leith was conducted in brigs. These were vessels of considerable size for those days, say from 160 to 200 tons burden. The important and growing trade between the Thames and the Forth was carried on by them. In some respects, however, they were not wholly suitable for the business, and about 1790 a movement began to displace them by rather smaller but handier craft called smacks. These soon acquired wide renown, and proved so suitable for the conveyance of both passengers and goods that within some twenty years there had been formed to engage in the Leith and London trade four companies, which owned between them twenty-seven fine vessels. One of these, the London and Edinburgh Shipping Company, still carries on this service with admirable energy, and, of course, with vessels of the most modern description. A model of the *Comet*, a smack once owned by this Company, may be seen within one of their office windows in Commercial Street.

Of these smacks and their encounters with the French privateers which then infested the North Sea in large numbers, many stirring tales are told. For these were



the days of the Napoleonic wars, and even peaceful merchantmen were armed with carronades—so called from being made at the Carron Ironworks—and their crews were kept well drilled and ready to repel the attacks made upon them. On one occasion in 1805 a privateer falling in with one of these smacks, the *Swallow*, opened fire upon her, doubtless relying upon an easy capture of a fairly valuable prize. For the result the Frenchmen could hardly have been prepared, as the gallant Leithers replied with such spirit and to so good effect that the enemy was fain to abandon the fight and to draw off in a crippled condition without having damaged the smack in any way.

Such encounters as the *Swallow's* were of very common occurrence all through the wars of the eighteenth century, and show the stuff of which Leith captains and mariners of those times were made. But the Leith sailormen, in the long and strenuous fight against Napoleon, did more than merely defend their ships when attacked. In 1795 the ship captains of the Port, to the number of one hundred and twenty, offered to serve their country at sea in any capacity suitable to their position, while two hundred Newhaven fishermen manned the gunship *Texel*, and, capturing the French frigate *Neyden*, returned to Newhaven in triumph. As we shall see later, when occasion called, the same indomitable courage was not lacking on the part of her modern sailormen in the Great War.

To aid in the defence of Leith if an attack should be made, the Martello Tower was built in 1809. Leith Fort, upon which the chief burden of defence would have lain, had been constructed in 1779 after the confusion and terror of the threatened attack on the Port by Paul Jones and his three warships. Happily no occasion

arose to test the efficiency of these works for the purpose for which they were erected.

It has already been mentioned that a large expansion of the trade and commerce of the Port had been taking place for a considerable time prior to 1800. Up till then Leith possessed no docks. The ships came into the harbour and lay alongside the quay wall that lined



THE OLD HARBOUR AND PIER.

the river bank. This, as its shipping business extended, became more and more an intolerable condition of affairs. It also suffered great inconvenience from the existence of a bar at the harbour mouth, which confined to a comparatively short period at the top of high-water of each tide the time during which craft of any but the smallest size could enter or leave. The result was that two wet docks were constructed on the west side of the harbour which provided accommodation for about

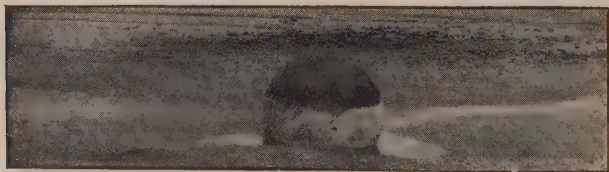
one hundred and fifty vessels of the size then generally trading with Leith.

This work was begun in 1800, and, including two dry docks, was only completed in 1817. The formation of these docks involved the destruction of an old Leith landmark, a great rock even larger than the "Penny Bap" at Seafield. This shell-covered rock, which lay on the sands just off the Citadel, was known as Shelly-coat, and according to the superstitious was the haunt of a demon who wore a strange garment covered with shells, the fearsome rattle of which appalled even the most courageous. The Leith boys of older and more superstitious days looked upon it as a daring feat to run round this rock three times, which they were wont to do with quivering courage, repeating the challenge—

"Shelly-coat ! Shelly-coat ! gang awa' hame,  
I cry na' yer mercy, I fear na' yer name."

They would then run for their lives, fearful of being followed by Shelly-coat to punish them for their defiance.

The dock plans included a proposal for a large future extension towards Newhaven. This site, now covered by the Caledonian Railway Station, was, at that time, of course, part of the open Firth. Recently this proposal has been revived in a somewhat different form, and authorized by Act of Parliament.



THE "PENNY BAP," SEAFIELD.  
(An iceborne Boulder from the Western Hills.)

## Chapter XXXI.

### THE COMMERCE OF LEITH.

ANY account bearing upon the history of the commerce and shipping of Leith should not fail to include reference to the body by which the affairs of the Port have been administered—and that with outstanding success—for close upon one hundred years. This, then, may be conveniently introduced at this point.

The Commissioners for the Harbour and Docks of Leith, the title by which they are officially designated, although more commonly styled the Leith Dock Commission, came into existence in 1826. For a very long time previous to that the City of Edinburgh had, by right of royal grants and otherwise, enjoyed the position of proprietor of the harbour, and latterly also of the two docks, the construction of which, as stated in the preceding chapter, was completed in 1817.

To meet the cost of these docks, Edinburgh had had to borrow large sums of money from time to time. Her administration of affairs was not successful ; so both her own finances and those of the Port of Leith fell into a serious condition. The management of the harbour and docks was put into the hands of a new composite body of twenty-one Commissioners, on which, however, she continued for about a dozen years to enjoy a prepon-

derating voice. These changes took effect in 1826, and the settlement then made continued in operation till 1838.

In the month of July of that year an Act of Parliament, commonly styled the "City Agreement Act," terminated the control by the municipality of Edinburgh of the management of the docks and harbour of Leith. Certain financial burdens, it is true, were put upon the dock revenues; but these have been redeemed by payments from time to time out of accumulated surplus income, the last being discharged in 1896. By the Act of 1838 the composition of the Commission was entirely changed, and the number of its members reduced to eleven. Of these five were appointed by the Treasury, three by the Town Council of Edinburgh, and three by that of Leith. But to ensure that the affairs of the Commission would be free of the control of either of these councils, it was enacted that no member of either of them was eligible for election as a Commissioner. This prohibition has been removed of recent years, and councillors may now serve on the Dock Commission.

The affairs of the docks and harbour were conducted under the "City Agreement Act" up till 1876, when an Act known as the "Leith Harbour and Docks Act" came into operation. It may be said that this Act forms the basis upon which the existing superstructure of the dock undertaking is founded. Its provisions placed upon a much more popular footing the constituencies which sent representatives to the Commission, as well as the modes of elections; it brought into accord with modern conditions many of the working arrangements; and it revised and simplified the charges upon ships and goods for the accommodation provided and



the services rendered. These various arrangements have since been modified in certain directions ; and the passing of the " Edinburgh Extension Act " of 1920, by which Edinburgh and Leith were amalgamated in municipal affairs, had a certain bearing upon them. The Commission now consists of fifteen members. Six of these are elected by those who pay dock rates amounting to not less than £4 per annum ; three members are chosen by the owners of ships registered at the Port of Leith upon which dues are paid ; the Town Council of the now extended City of Edinburgh sends three ; while the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, the Edinburgh Merchant Company, and the Leith Chamber of Commerce each returns one member.

Under the administration of the body constituted by these successive Acts the Port has prospered and progressed greatly. The services of the gentlemen who have composed it—for up till now ladies, though eligible, have not ventured to sit upon the Board, by many regarded as the local " Upper House "—have, of course, been given entirely without remuneration. Till recent years contests for the seats pertaining to the ratepayers were of frequent occurrence ; but this state of matters may be said to be at an end for the present. While, therefore, it cannot be maintained that a burning desire to serve upon the Commission has been uniformly manifested, it has all along been possible to secure for this branch of public service a constant succession of the most capable and far-seeing men in the business communities of Edinburgh and Leith. It may be justly claimed that the undertaking known as the Harbour and Docks of Leith affords one of the most outstanding examples in this country of disinterested and successful management in the public interest of what in the broadest

sense is a valuable national asset. The fact that it has been managed for decades by local individuals, free from bureaucratic interference or governmental control, has, without doubt, contributed to this in large measure.

Some particulars indicating the extent of the shipping trade of Leith and the financial position of the Dock Commission will be given later on.

In the preceding chapter some account was given of the progress of the Port in the latter part of the eighteenth century and of the first two decades of the succeeding one. About this time steam navigation began to occupy the thoughts of shipowners, shipbuilders, and engineers. In this connection, as in not a few others, Leith was well to the fore. A paddle steamer named the *Experiment* was built in 1788, to plans made by Patrick Stewart of Dalswinton; but not much seems to have come of this. About five-and-twenty years passed before the first regular steamer traded upon the Firth of Forth. She was named the *Lady of the Lake*, and sailed between Leith and Alloa. A considerable time elapsed, however, before steam became common as a means of propulsion in the oversea trade of Leith. In the meantime a company was formed in 1822 to carry on trade with Australian ports, chiefly Sydney. It owned four sailing ships of what was then considered large size. For a time the "Australian Company," as it was styled, conducted a satisfactory trade; but it later proved unsuccessful, and was wound up after a trading history of fifteen or sixteen years.

At this time several Leith vessels were engaged in a trade which later became quite extinct here—that is, the whale fishing. The ships composing the fleet usually sailed on the same day some time in March.

and it seems to have been regarded as a general holiday annually. The fishing grounds were customarily either off Greenland or in the Davis Straits. In the latter case seven or eight months would be occupied, the voyage to the former being generally somewhat shorter. When time permitted, the vessels frequently made an additional trip within the twelve months to the West Indies for rum and sugar, Leith being at that time one of the centres of the sugar-refining industry in Scotland. Several of these whaling ships belonged to the brothers Wood, Peter and Christopher, who carried on a blubber-smelting business in the Timber Bush. The smell was naturally strong and rather offensive; and with the wind in certain directions while the process of smelting was going on the people of Leith would remark to each other that Peter Wood's scent bottle was at work that day!

The rapid extension of the shipping trade, the increasing size of the vessels, and the introduction of steam navigation, presented problems to the reconstituted Dock Commission immediately after its formation in 1838, as already recounted. Reports and plans were prepared by several gentlemen during the ensuing six or eight years; but it was not till 1847 that parliamentary powers to increase the accommodation were obtained. The construction of the Victoria Dock was commenced forthwith, and completed in 1852, although the sheds and equipment, and other improvements connected with the piers, etc., were not finished till about three years later. For about ten years after the Victoria Dock was opened the accommodation of the Port sufficed for its needs; but the continued growth in the volume of traffic called for not only more dock and quay space, but that that should be suitable for the

requirements of a constantly increasing size of vessel. To provide this the Albert Dock was begun in 1863, its construction occupying six years. It was equipped with hydraulic machinery, the first of its kind in Scotland.

While the Commissioners, as will be thus seen, were continually striving to meet the demands of the trade of the Port, so far as their financial resources permitted,



IMPERIAL DRY DOCK AND ENTRANCE TO HARBOUR.

these demands continued to grow at a constantly increasing rate. Graving docks of larger and still larger sizes had to be provided; increased shed accommodation had to be supplied; more quay space for the storage of timber and similar commodities had to be found; and a handsome swing-bridge across the harbour had to be built. This bridge, it may be said, was for a considerable time the largest of its kind in this country.

the clear span being one hundred and twenty feet. All these, and other extensions and improvements, were carried out from time to time as the needs arose, and as circumstances allowed. And yet the incessant call was for more, and still more.

About this time, also, a matter was taking place elsewhere which had a bearing of some moment upon Leith ships and shipping, both then and since—the construction and opening of the Suez Canal. Among the more enterprising of the Leith shipowners of that day was a Mr. Donald R. Macgregor, who later became Member of Parliament for the Leith District of Burghs. Foreseeing that the new route to the East could not fail to greatly affect the flow of commerce between Great Britain and India, China, Japan, and our Australian Colonies, Mr. Macgregor set himself, with characteristic vigour, to meet the new conditions in the Far Eastern trades. With the aid of local capital, ships and men were provided and connections formed which, for a considerable period, brought profitable employment to both. Mr. Macgregor himself, it is true, was not entirely successful financially, but up till the present day the relations thus brought about between Leith and the East remain in part at least.

The growing trade, particularly with America, and the still increasing tonnage of the vessels frequenting the Port, put pressure upon the Dock Commission for further dock and quay accommodation, and led to the making of the Edinburgh Dock. This necessitated, to begin with, the building of a great seawall on the sands to the east of the then existing dock works. Begun in 1874, this occupied some three years; and by it over one hundred acres were reclaimed from the Firth of Forth. Within this area the dock itself was made;



the work being so far completed by July 1881 as to permit of its being opened for traffic by the Duke of Edinburgh.

A lapse of about a dozen years served again to bring up the ever-recurring subject of additional accommodation. The greatly extended trade with America was attracting to Leith vessels of a size taxing to the utmost both the depth of water available and the capacity of the sheds to accommodate the cargoes. Parliamentary powers were therefore obtained for a new deep-water dock upon the foreshore to the north-west of the Albert Dock. Being entered from a point considerably farther down the harbour than any of the other docks, it has a substantially greater depth of water, the gauge sometimes registering at spring tides fully thirty-one and a half feet on its sill. The Imperial Dock, as it was named, was opened in 1904. Equipped with extensive sheds, hoists of exceptionally large size for shipping coals and similar bulk cargoes without handling, powerful cranes for dealing with heavy pieces of machinery and cargo, and with a most valuable adjunct in the form of a very large dry dock, it very quickly proved a splendid addition to the undertaking under the charge of the Commissioners.

For some time previous to the outbreak of war in 1914 plans were in existence for a great extension of the dock estate. These provide for the reclamation of a large portion of the foreshore between Leith and Newhaven. This, it will be remembered, was proposed by Rennie fully a century earlier, although in a somewhat different form. On the ground so reclaimed it is contemplated to place further dock accommodation; to supply greatly increased facilities for the prosecution of the fishing industry; and to afford room for the

storage of wood and other commodities. The present conditions as regards two most important factors, however, militate strongly against proceeding immediately with this work. On the one hand the costs of construction meantime stand at an unprecedented height. This would place an exceptionally heavy burden for many years upon the resources of the Commission if the undertaking were carried out while this continues. The volume of traffic, on the other hand, has as yet shown only a partial recovery from the great set-back experienced in several directions during the war. This, again, while minimizing the need for increased accommodation for the present, also reduces substantially the surplus revenue at the disposal of the Commissioners for such purposes. It seems probable, therefore, that some years must elapse before this projected extension can become an accomplished fact.

The area of the existing dock estate is 375 acres, of which  $104\frac{1}{2}$  acres are occupied by the docks and harbour. There are six wet docks and eight dry docks, the length of the quays of the former and the inner harbour measuring 24,020 feet. As already stated, the recent war greatly interfered with not a few branches of the shipping trade of Leith—quite a number of these, indeed, were completely stopped, of which several have up till now given no indication of an early resumption. The high-water mark of Leith's shipping trade as regards volume was reached in 1913. According to the statistics compiled by the Leith Dock Commission, the imports amounted during the twelve months to Whitsunday in that year to 1,564,991 tons, while the exports reached 3,081,046 tons, a total inward and outward of 4,646,037 tons. The quantities of the more important commodities were :—

IMPORTS.		1913.	EXPORTS.	
	Tons.			Tons.
Grain, flour, and meal . . . . .	551,510	Coals . . . . .	2,230,798	
Sugar . . . . .	124,353	Grain . . . . .	145,808	
Wood . . . . .	101,093	Ale, beer, and porter . . . . .	80,512	
Iron and steel . . . . .	88,537	Iron and steel . . . . .	68,264	
Seeds . . . . .	60,428	Sulphate of ammonia . . . . .	64,659	
Fish . . . . .	59,776	Fish . . . . .	59,514	
Fruit and vegetables . . . . .	30,639	Sugar . . . . .	57,512	
Eggs . . . . .	30,065	Paper . . . . .	49,291	
Paper . . . . .	27,371	Oils . . . . .	34,513	
Cement . . . . .	27,106	Chemicals . . . . .	22,981	
Oils . . . . .	24,814	Vegetables . . . . .	20,455	
Butter . . . . .	22,651	Sewing machines . . . . .	14,864	
Oilcake . . . . .	18,255	Bricks . . . . .	13,178	
China clay . . . . .	17,652	Seeds . . . . .	12,605	
Esparto . . . . .	14,851	Paraffin wax and scale . . . . .	7,911	
Hemp and flax . . . . .	14,356	Jute goods . . . . .	7,606	

Many of these classes of goods, it will be seen, constitute the raw materials or the finished products of not a few of our local industries.

The total revenue of the Commissioners in the year in question amounted to £163,546, comprising £40,082 upon ships, £76,606 upon goods, and £46,858 for charges for the use of dry docks, sheds, rails, and other miscellaneous sources of income. Owing, however, to the greatly enhanced rates which the very much higher costs of working and maintenance necessitated, the revenue for the twelve months ending Whitsunday 1921 reached the amount of £299,159, being about £2,000 below that of the preceding year, which constituted a record in the annals of the Port. The amount to May 15, 1921, represented £96,053 upon ships, £94,421 upon 958,489 tons of imports and 727,725 tons of exports, and £108,685 of miscellaneous receipts.

From first to last the sums expended upon the harbour and docks and their equipment have exceeded

£3,500,000. The present value of the whole undertaking is put considerably above that ; while the debt remaining upon it at Whitsunday 1921 was £1,008,639.

Of the shipowning companies and firms whose head-



WEST AND EAST PIERS.

quarters are at Leith the oldest is undoubtedly Messrs. George Gibson and Company, Ltd., which was founded in 1797 : indeed it is recorded that as far back as 1758 a Mr. Mungo Campbell Gibson was connected with the shipping trade of the Port, and it is believed that this connection

has continued unbroken from then till now. There has recently been incorporated with the company the firm of Messrs. James Rankine and Son, whose head office was in Glasgow, although their principal shipping port was Grangemouth. The combined fleet numbers seventeen steamers, by which an extensive business is conducted, principally with the Dutch, Belgian, and northern French ports. These trades lying directly within the scope of the naval operations in the North Sea during the late war, it fell to the lot of quite a number of their steamers to traverse during its course between one hundred and two hundred times the zone most frequented by the enemy submarines. It is therefore not a matter of surprise that ten of their vessels were sunk by them.

The present head of the company is Mr. Robert A. Somerville, who is assisted by his brother, Mr. Hugh C. Somerville, and Messrs. John and David Macgill. In the year 1850 the firm of Messrs. Gibson put its first steamer, the *Balmoral*, into the Leith and Rotterdam trade. Previous to that time it had been carried on by sailing vessels of moderate size. The occasion of the first strike of dock workers recorded at Leith, which took place in connection with a steamer which Messrs. Gibson had built some years later, may be worthy of mention. To facilitate the work of loading and discharging steam winches had been provided ; but on her being berthed at Leith the men refused to make use of the gear, as it would " take the bread out of the mouths " of several of them by reducing the time taken to do the work, and perhaps also the number required.

It was stated in the preceding chapter that the London and Edinburgh Shipping Company, Ltd., was established in 1809. These were the days of the famous smacks, which were followed by the almost equally famous



Aberdeen-built clippers. It was one of this Company's clippers, the *Isabella*, from Canton, that brought into Leith the first cargo of tea which had ever been shipped to any British port except London. This was in 1833, when the Charter of the East India Company, which up



THE CLIPPER "ISABELLA."

to that time had the monopoly of the tea trade with China and British India, came to an end and the trade became free. The cargo, whose arrival excited the greatest interest in the Port, was for Messrs. Andrew Melrose and Company, the well-known tea merchants, who now own extensive warehouses in Leith.

A few years later, however, the general introduction of steam navigation entirely put an end to the service carried on by these very fine and splendidly commanded vessels, and the introduction of a fleet of steamers for the trade between the Thames and the Forth took place. During the war the company lost four of its vessels,

the fleet now numbering seven. The manager is Mr. George C. Duff, who joined it in 1907 as assistant manager, and was promoted to his present position in 1916.

Although its foundation was somewhat later, The Leith, Hull, and Hamburg Steam Packet Company, Ltd., has become possessed of numerically the largest local fleet. About the year 1836 a few gentlemen combined to run steamers from Leith to Dundee and to Hull. It is said that for a time their starting point was the now defunct Chain Pier at Trinity, and that the Fife ports formed their objective. One of the leading partners was Mr. Thomas Barclay, a brother of the head of the great shipbuilding concern known latterly as Messrs. Barclay, Curle and Company, Ltd., Glasgow. The venture prospered, the fleet increased, and various new trades were in turn inaugurated. In 1862 the late Mr. James Currie joined the company as manager, his brother, the late Sir Donald Currie, having become a partner some time before. Mr. Currie died in 1900, and his elder son, Mr. James Currie, M.A., LL.D., J.P., was appointed to the vacant post. The management continues to be conducted under the style of "James Currie and Company," Mr. Currie's brother, Mr. Alastair Currie, C.A., being associated with him in the conduct of the company's business.

When the war with Germany broke out in 1914 its fleet numbered thirty-six steamers, besides about a score of small vessels for local services. Among the ports with which it carried on regular services were Newcastle, Sunderland, Hull, Hamburg, Bremen, Christiansand, Copenhagen, Stettin, Danzig, Pillau, Königsberg, and Libau, besides less frequent sailings to other Baltic ports, and to those in the Mediterranean and North

Africa. As the direct outcome of the years of war the company lost eighteen of its steamers—sunk by submarines or mines or seized by the enemy—besides two detained in German ports on its outbreak, but returned after its conclusion; and three other losses of which two were indirectly occasioned by the war. Besides its other services it carries on a long-established trade between Liverpool and Manchester on this side and Hamburg and Bremen on the other. Its fleet at present numbers twenty-one.

Of considerably more recent date than those already mentioned, the firm of Messrs. William Thomson and Company owns a fleet of twenty steamers—the well-known “Ben” line—which by reason of their large size give at present a greater total tonnage than that of any other Leith concern. These are mostly engaged in the Far Eastern trade, their principal port for loading and discharging in this country being London. They are, however, not infrequent visitors to Leith, their home port. The principal managing owners are Mr. William Thomson and Sir James Wishart Thomson. The manifold public services of the latter gentleman, both at home and in the East in the course of the war, during which his company lost five large vessels, earned for him the well-merited title of K.B.E.

The firm of Messrs. Chr. Salvesen and Company, with a fleet at present of eleven steamers, carries on an extensive general trade, largely with Mediterranean ports. It has also a numerous fleet of other vessels engaged in the interesting industry of whale fishing at South Georgia, in the far south of the Atlantic Ocean. Eight of their steamers were lost during the war. The three partners in the firm are Messrs. J. T. Salvesen, F. G. Salvesen, J.P., and T. E. Salvesen, J.P., the first-named gentleman

being Norwegian Consul and the last named French Consular Agent and Vice-consul for Finland.

Undoubtedly the largest proportionate loss of tonnage arising out of the war was sustained by Messrs. James Cormack and Company. Their pre-war fleet numbered eleven, and of these the war deprived them of ten. Their trade was mainly conducted with Russian ports—Riga and Archangel, chiefly—and this is one of those which up till now have shown no signs of an early revival. The head of the firm is Mr. James Cormack, J.P., who is assisted in its management by his two sons, Messrs. James Cormack, Jun., and A. C. Cormack.

The other local shipping companies and firms include Messrs. Thomas C. Steven and Company; the New Line, Ltd., managed by Sir Richard Mackie's firm of Messrs. Richard Mackie and Company; and Messrs. A. F. Henry and Macgregor, Ltd., all of whose vessels are employed in the general European and coasting business.

Besides those already named, a number of others carry on very extensive shipping trades with Leith, although their headquarters are located elsewhere. Among the more important of these are the North of Scotland and Orkney and Shetland Steam Navigation Company, Ltd., whose designation amply indicates the sphere of its operations; Messrs. Furness, Withy, and Company, Ltd., by which a very extensive American trade is conducted, as well as others with Danish ports and with Iceland; the Coast Lines, Ltd., whose steamers call at the various ports between Leith and Liverpool, besides at one or two on the north-east coast of England; the General Steam Navigation Company, Ltd., conducting a regular service with London; the Antrim Iron Ore Company, Ltd., whose vessels trade regularly between Belfast and the north of England, calling at

Leith; and the Shipping and Coal Company, Ltd., which carries on a line with Amsterdam.

From what has been already said, it may be gathered that the services rendered to the nation by the shipping community of Leith during the Great War were, in proportion to its resources, surpassed by none, if equalled by any other. The shipowners and their men vied with each other in their willingness, even their anxiety, to respond to their country's call. However heavy the toll taken by the enemy submarines upon his own or his neighbours' vessels, no shipowner hesitated for a moment to place his ships at the disposal of the Government. However serious the risk to life and limb, no vessel was ever detained for one hour by hesitation on the part of the crew to embark on the most perilous of voyages. In two or three cases the owners of fine steamers and of handsome yachts placed these for lengthened periods at the disposal of the authorities free of all charge. Men who had undergone shipwreck by mine or torpedo, sometimes more than once or twice, and whose shipmates in many instances had perished before their eyes, were found as ready to "sign on" again for further service as before their first experience of this nature.

The fifty-five vessels of the eight shipping concerns already referred to as having been sunk or otherwise lost through the war by no means exhaust the list of those belonging to Leith whose end came about in this way. Practically one half of the tonnage of the Port was thus destroyed. But the men who, knowing the dangers and daring all, went forth on their hazardous enterprises that Britain might be served and saved—went forth, but returned no more—these men, good and true, heroes all, Leith holds in everlasting remembrance: their name endureth for ever. And of the others who,



going about their peaceful business in great waters, met and fought and overcame their country's foes as gallantly as did their progenitors of earlier centuries—shall not a word also be set down to record their deeds?

One such vessel, the *Coblenz*, commanded by Captain Henry G. Speed, on a homeward voyage from Italian ports, encountering an enemy submarine, was subjected to a lengthy attack. Armed with a small-calibre gun



S.S. "COBLENZ" IN KIEL CANAL, 1921.

for purposes of defence, the master mustered his men, made his dispositions, and replied with such spirit and effect that after a two hours' combat the enemy was fain to submerge and escape from the deadly counter-attack of the brave men from Leith. But for the fortunate circumstance that an enemy shell which lodged in the coal-bunker failed to explode, probably not one of the passengers or crew would have been left to tell the tale. While the ship suffered severely from the battering to which she was subjected, the gallant men aboard of her did not get off scot-free. One passenger

was so badly wounded that he succumbed and died in two or three days, while a member of the crew had his leg shattered, and, there being no doctor aboard, the captain, after driving off the enemy, had to get out his surgical instruments and amputate the damaged limb. Of such stuff are Leith's seafarers still made—worthy sons of their gallant sires, some of whose exploits have already been recounted in these pages.



GREAT CRANE, IMPERIAL DOCK.

## Chapter XXXII.

### THE INDUSTRIES OF LEITH.

SEVERAL of Leith's former industries have passed out of existence in the Port. Thus, for instance, although Leith does an enormous business in the rectifying, blending, bonding, and exporting of spirits, yet there are nowadays no distilleries within the bounds of the Port. Nor does it now contain a single working brewery. Enormous quantities of ale are exported from Leith to nearly every country in the world, but none of it is brewed in Leith itself. It is all made in Edinburgh, which, with its twenty-four breweries, is the principal centre of the brewing industry in Scotland.

Leith used to possess a flourishing cane sugar refining business, but it is many a day since the last of the Port's sugar refineries closed down. This was the sugar-house in Breadalbane Street, which in its palmy days carried on an extensive trade, turning out two hundred and fifty tons of refined sugar every week. Another industry which flourished in Leith for over two centuries was the glass-bottle trade. One record shows us that in 1777 there were almost sixteen thousand hundredweights of bottles made in Leith. The remains of one of the old cones or furnaces may still be seen at Salamander Street, which owes its arresting name to what was once its chief industry.

It is interesting to note that at the present time there is a suggestion of reviving the sugar-refining and glass-bottle trades in Leith. It is thought that a beet-sugar factory might well turn out a product able to compete successfully against the cane sugar coming from Cuba and other West Indies sources. It is also believed that Leith is well adapted for the successful prosecution of the glass trade, and that a large and flourishing glass industry could again be established in the Port. Whether these ideas will ever take practical shape remains for the future to disclose.

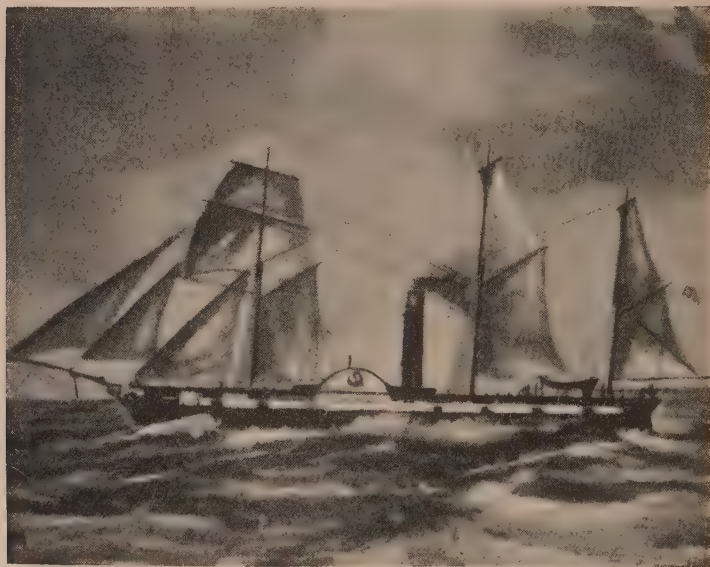
Leith's leading industries in our own day are ship-building, the wine trade, flour milling, biscuit making, rope making, and the timber trade, and with each of these we shall now deal in turn.

### *Shipbuilding.*

Although the Forth ranks next to the Clyde among Scottish shipbuilding districts, yet the shipbuilding industry in Leith has not kept pace with the progress of the Port. During the first half of the nineteenth century Leith gave promise of being one of the great shipbuilding centres of the country, but the Clyde seems to have drawn the trade away from the Port. It has five shipyards in which vessels up to four hundred feet can be built and engined, but now most work is done in the branch of ship repairing. It has six public and two private dry docks, all thoroughly equipped for cleaning and repairing ships. Vessels can there be overhauled without shifting port, a great convenience and economy.

One of the oldest shipbuilding firms in Leith was Messrs. Sime and Rankin's, which built several warships

in the days of the old "wooden walls." Their yard, now built on, was opposite the Custom House, but their dry dock, dating from 1720, and the oldest in Leith, still remains, between the Shore and Sandport Street, and now forms the repairing dock of Messrs. Marr and Company.



THE "SIRIUS."

(From a picture in the possession of Messrs. Menzies, Leith.)

At the Old Dock gates is the yard of Messrs. Menzies, a firm which has been established for over a century, and which has sent out many fine ships in its day. In 1837 Messrs. Menzies built the *Sirius*, the first steamship to cross the Atlantic, which she did in eighteen days, arriving a few hours before the *Great Western*, which had set out three days after her. The *Sirius* ran out



of coal, and had to keep her furnaces going with timber and resin. The picture of the launch of the Royal Mail steamship *Forth*, of one thousand nine hundred and forty tons, from the yard of Messrs. Menzies in 1841—a painting greatly prized by the firm—shows that the launching of a vessel in Leith in those times, like the annual departure of the whaling fleet on its perilous voyage, was a notable event—the day being quite a gala day.

The greater part of the new tonnage launched at Leith is usually from the yard of Messrs. Ramage and Ferguson. The firm have built about ninety high-class steam yachts, and it is in connection with yacht building that their name is best known; but, in addition to yachts, they have also turned out many fine types of sailing ships, and passenger and cargo steamers, including light-draft passenger vessels for service in China.

A notable vessel recently built was the five-masted sailing ship *København*, built for the East Asiatic Company, Copenhagen, and which is unique in being fitted with a 650 h.p. Diesel engine. The vessel is one of the largest sailing ships in the world. Messrs. Ramage and Ferguson's engine works have recently been modernized, and a large number of new machines fitted which enable them to cope with all branches of marine engineering. The boiler shop is capable of building boilers of the largest size.

Other shipbuilding firms are Messrs. Hawthorns, Messrs. Cran and Somerville, Messrs. Robb, and Messrs. Morton. Since the war a principal feature of the work of all the firms we have named has been the altering and equipping of the vessels surrendered by the Germans. In 1919, for instance, Messrs. Cran and Somerville alone dealt with over thirty surrendered merchant ships.

The Port has also had a large share in refitting for their ordinary commercial service those merchant ships which the Admiralty had called into its service, and which



THE "KØBENHAVN" LEAVING LEITH.

(Photo, *Edinburgh Evening News*.)

had done splendid duty in patrolling, mine-sweeping, or transport.

### *The Wine Trade.*

As early as the twelfth century, as we have seen,

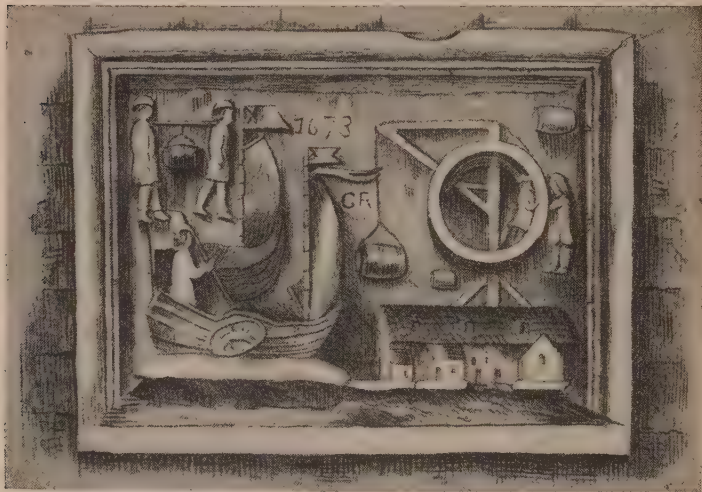
the mariners of Leith brought wine from abroad for the use of the Abbot and Canons of Holyrood. In the days of the early Stuart kings, after Holyrood had become their court, the king's wines all came *via* Leith. The duties payable by merchants on goods landed at Leith were exceedingly moderate in those times, for we find that in 1477 the duty on a tun of wine was only 1s. 4d. Scots (about 5d. of our money).

In the days of Mary Queen of Scots, when there was so much coming and going between Scotland and France, claret from France was the chief wine imported into Leith. This trade continued to grow for about two hundred and fifty years until the time of the Napoleonic wars, when it increased greatly in price owing to the duty imposed on it by the British Government. Sherry from Spain and port from Portugal then began to be imported in increasing quantities.

In our own day Leith is one of the chief wine-importing ports of the kingdom, and houses a large number of wine firms, well known as importers of wines of the finest qualities, and most of them long established. For instance, in the old ledgers of Messrs. Bell, Rannie, and Company, who began business in 1715, now over two centuries ago, are to be found the wine bills run up by Bonnie Prince Charlie for his gay and brilliant assemblies in 'Forty-five times. The chief wines coming into Leith are claret and burgundy from Bordeaux, champagne from Bordeaux and Dunkirk, sherry from Cadiz, port from Oporto, and burgundy from Australia. Champagne comes already bottled, but the other varieties are usually imported in the cask. The export of whisky from, and the import of wine into Leith, has given it a large trade in coopering. In his *Bride of Lammermoor* Sir Walter Scott speaks of "Peter Punccheon that was

cooper to the queen's stores at the Timmer Burse (that is, Timber Bush) at Leith."

When the wine arrives at Leith it is first clarified and then bottled. It then takes on its bouquet or aroma, as it would not do if allowed to remain in the cask. In many parts of Leith there are huge cellars in which are stored, bin after bin, a huge array of wine bottles,



SCULPTURED STONE OF THE STINGMEN, OR WINE PORTERS,  
TOLBOOTH WYND.

each on its side. In this position they lie for from ten to fifteen years, their contents slowly maturing. The temperature of these wine cellars remains the same, day after day, and year after year, never being allowed to vary from a certain standard. So extensive are some of these vaults that a visitor to one of them, after traversing long avenues of bins, may peer out of a grating into a street a considerable distance away from that at

which he entered. Stores representing fortunes lie unsuspected beneath the feet of Leithers as they walk their streets.

The oldest building associated with the wine trade in Leith is the Vaults between Giles Street and St. Andrew Street, for long years the business premises, as they are still, of Messrs. J. G. Thomson and Company. This building is locally known as the "Vouts," a name which, in spelling and pronunciation, carries us back to the troubled days of Mary Queen of Scots, when this building seemed to be as gloomy in appearance as it is to-day, for, as we have already seen, it was then known as the Black Vouts. The oldest date on the Vaults to-day is 1682, when the great building, much lower then than now, was either reconstructed or rebuilt. Messrs. J. G. Thomson began business here in 1785. It was they who raised the Vaults to their present height. But this historic building had been associated with the wine trade long years before Messrs. J. G. Thomson's time, as is shown by the richly decorated walls and ceiling of the original office, small in size compared with the present counting-house. The plaster decoration in the earlier office is very largely symbolical of the wine trade.

### *Milling.*

Leith has long been noted for flour making, its prominence in this industry being of course largely due to the fact that it is so conveniently situated for the importation of foreign grain. In pre-war times Leith imported four hundred and fifty thousand tons of grain annually.

The wheat used in the Leith mills is almost entirely foreign, although native wheat also enters into the mixture. Home-grown wheat is of good colour and



flavour, but is soft and lacking in gluten. Flour made from it alone looks pretty, but is so starchy and weak that it is good only for scones and other bakers' goods known as "smalls." A baker could never get his loaf to "rise" who made it from flour of this nature. The strongest wheat we get nowadays is Canadian Springs, and this forms the basis of the mixture for bakers' flour. Some Russian and Hungarian wheats are also strong, but are unobtainable meantime. Leith flour millers also use wheat from the United States, Argentina, Australia, and Manchuria, while Indian also comes into the Leith market at times.

When wagons laden with wheat come alongside one or other of the various Leith mills the wheat is emptied on to long bands of cloth, which move on rollers, and carry the wheat into the mill. Then it is caught in elevators, which are just like the buckets of a dredger, and these empty the wheat into huge tanks called silos. Below, these silos end in spouts, which the miller opens when he pleases. He opens two or three together, so as to mix the different wheats. Then other travelling bands take the wheat to be ground. The wheat passes through grooved rollers that crush the wheat between them, and then through fanning machines which blow away the chaff. The wheat is then ground small between smooth rollers, and, lastly, the flour is driven by a fan through meshes of very fine silk, and is ready for use.

While the above gives a general idea of what goes on in a Leith flour mill, it must not be supposed that the processes of modern milling are as simple as they would appear to be from the description just given. In reality flour milling is of a highly technical nature, and a flour mill contains vast arrays of highly intricate

and delicate machinery, all designed to produce the highest qualities of flour at the lowest possible cost. In spite of the great advances made in flour milling in the last forty years, millers do not yet rest content with the position they have achieved. New methods and new machinery are continually being introduced into the mills. Of all the improvements made in flour milling the greatest has been the introduction, in 1881, of steel rollers for grinding the wheat. From the earliest times until the latter part of last century millstones were used for wheat grinding. The substitution of steel rollers for these millstones has produced nothing less than a revolution in flour milling. The millstone is practically obsolete to-day for wheat-grinding purposes, though it is still used in the manufacture of Scotch oatmeal.

The Leith Flour Mills (locally known as Tod's Mills) in Commercial Street are the largest in the Port. The original mills were burned down in 1874. Leithers still remember and speak of this fire as one of the most destructive in the history of the town, the damage amounting to £168,000. In the original and also in the rebuilt mills the wheat was ground by millstones, but in 1882 steel roller mills were installed. Since that date great improvements have been made in milling machinery, as we have already said, and the Leith Mills have several times been reconstructed in order to give effect to these improvements and to keep the mills thoroughly up-to-date. They have now a capacity of over six hundred thousand bags per annum.

Junction Mill is a flour mill and also an oatmeal mill. It belongs to the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, who took it over from Messrs. John Inglis and Son in 1897. The capacity of the flour mill is about

fifteen sacks per hour, and in 1920 its production was 123,808 sacks. In the same year the oatmeal mill produced 28,504 sacks of oatmeal, all the oats used in



CRAWFORD'S SHOP AND DOVECOT GABLE, SHORE.

the mill being Scottish. Swanfield Mill in Bonnington Road is a flour mill, while Messrs. Inglis have a large oatmeal mill at Bonnington. These mills, like the others already mentioned, possess the latest types of milling machinery.

*Biscuit Making.*

In the firm of Messrs. William Crawford and Sons Leith possesses the oldest of the Scottish biscuit manufacturers. It was in 1813 that Mr. William Crawford founded the business in a small shop at the Shore of Leith, which, enlarged and modernized, is still occupied by one of his descendants. It immediately fronts the spot where in 1822 George IV. landed on his visit to Scotland. As every fresh step in the science and art of bread and biscuit making, and every improvement in machinery and method, were welcomed by the founder of the firm, increasing trade quickly outgrew the capacity of the original small premises at the Shore. Modern works were established in Elbe Street. These have been frequently extended and largely rebuilt as the firm progressed, and no trouble or expense has been spared to keep the works equipped with all that is latest and best in machinery and appliances. Crawford's shortbread and Crawford's biscuits have attained a national reputation, and have become widely known in some of the remotest parts of the globe. The factory affords employment to hundreds of Leith men and girls.

*Timber.*

The time when our own country could supply its needs with regard to timber is long since past. So many are the uses to which timber is nowadays put, and so many different kinds are needed to meet all the requirements of our various industries, that most of the timber now used in Britain comes from abroad. Before the war we were importing over 11,000,000 tons of timber annually, of which 7,000,000 tons came from

North Russia (the Baltic States, Finland, and Archangel), Sweden, and Norway, 2,000,000 tons from Eastern Europe, and only slightly over 2,000,000 tons from countries outside of Europe (mainly Canada, United States, South America, Australia and New Zealand, India, the West Coast of Africa, the West Indies, Mexico, Honduras, etc., and Japan).

These figures show that our country in normal times is dependent on the Baltic and White Seas for seven-elevenths of its timber supplies, and make it quite clear how Leith, with its advantageous position with regard to Russian, Swedish, and Norwegian ports, has become one of the chief timber ports in the United Kingdom. An important factor in the growth of Leith's timber import lies in the connection between the coal and timber trades. North Russia, Sweden, and Norway have no coal supplies of their own, and as Leith is situated near coalfields its ships have thus at hand for their outward voyage exactly the kind of cargo which is required.

The chief timber importers and sawmillers in Leith are Park, Dobson, and Company, Eastern Sawmills, Easter Road; John Walker, Lochend Road; Garland and Roger, Baltic Street; Fergus Harris, Morton Street; and John Mitchell and Company, Leith Walk. During 1912, 1913, 1914, and 1920 these firms imported timber as follows: 1912, 90,412 tons; 1913, 100,941 tons; 1914, 80,096 tons; 1920, 117,245 tons.

The timber used to be imported into Leith in the form of logs, roughly squared by means of the adze; but with the introduction of machinery, however, the timber is now brought into the Port in the shape of sawn planks, deals, battens, and boards of various sizes, the amount imported in the log being very small nowadays. Indeed, so great has the change been in the form



in which timber is imported that sometimes material is brought into Leith in a fully dressed state. Thus, especially from Sweden, we get flooring boards, doors, window frames, and mouldings of every kind, all ready for the use of the joiner and carpenter.

The wood brought into Leith from the Baltic and White Sea ports is nearly all of the pine family, and is known in the timber trade as red or yellow deal. Red and yellow pines are also imported into Leith direct from Canada and the United States. While the principal timber trade of Leith is connected with the woods just mentioned, known as soft woods, it has also a share in the hard wood branch of the trade. Of the hard woods the chief are oak (from the Baltic, America, and Japan), mahogany (from Mexico, Central America, the West Indies, and West Africa), teak from Burma, and ash from Japan. These hard woods are not shipped to Leith direct—except those which come from the Baltic—but reach it *via* some other port, such as Glasgow or Liverpool.

### *Rope, Twine, and Sail Making.*

The making of ropes, twines, and sailcloths forms one of Leith's largest and most specialized industries. The well-known Edinburgh Roperie and Sailcloth Company was founded in Leith in 1750 by a number of Edinburgh and Leith merchants who combined to advance the interests of the industry. The company was encouraged in its enterprise by obtaining at reasonable rates grants of land at the north-east corner of the Links. From a small beginning the trade has now reached immense proportions, the enormous development of the company's business having given to Leith a celebrity in the manufacture of ship rigging unsurpassed in any

country in the world. During the hundred and seventy years that have elapsed since the establishment of the firm, the scene of their earliest operations has from time to time been extended, till now the works in Bath Street cover an area of twenty-five acres.

In 1805 the company established the Malleny Mills, eleven miles from Edinburgh, where abundant supplies of water for bleaching purposes existed, and where the flax and yarns were prepared for the manufacturing operations of the Leith works. These mills were used for this purpose for many years, until the increased supply of water brought in by the Edinburgh and District Water Trust enabled the company to concentrate their whole works in Leith. About the same time the works at Glasgow (where fishing lines, etc., were principally made) were also transferred to Leith, so that the whole business is now housed in the Port, local control and economical management being thus secured.

It may be mentioned that an uncle of William Ewart Gladstone was formerly a managing partner in the business, while Sir John Gladstone, the father of the great statesman, gained his earliest commercial experience in the counting-house of the Edinburgh Roperie and Sailcloth Company, of which he was afterwards one of the leading partners.

At the present day the business is composed of two great divisions—cordage and sailcloth making. In the cordage departments are manufactured: (1) Ropes of all descriptions in Manila, New Zealand, and Russian hemp, and in jute fibres. Yacht Manila ropes, steamer and railway ropes, and tarred trawl ropes for trawl fishing are manufactured, but a very large part of the company's cordage business consists in the manufacture of large Manila ropes—up to twenty-four inches in cir-

cumference, and in length up to two hundred fathoms—used as towing ropes for large ships. (2) Fishing-lines for deep-sea, coast, and river fishing. These are distributed over the entire fishing world. (3) Shop twine. (4) Binder twine, used by self-binding reaping machines. Large consignments of the twine are sent from Leith Docks to the Canadian harvest fields. (5) Trawl twine, used in the manufacture of trawl nets. This twine is made of the finest Manila fibre, as none but the best of materials will withstand the strain of trawl-net fishing.

In the sailcloth departments are made as many as ten different brands of sailcloth, the Leith sailcloth having attained an enviable reputation among ship-owners and being known the world over. With the place of the sailing ship, however, taken by the steamer the output of sailcloth for ships' sails has fallen off a good deal, and the company has had to look in other directions for the disposal of its manufactures, with the result that in addition to sailcloth it now manufactures large quantities of canvas, etc.



BONNINGTON : AN EARLY CENTRE OF INDUSTRY.

## Chapter XXXIII.

### HOW LEITH WAS GOVERNED.

#### *Municipal Administration.*

IN former chapters there has been given the history of the relations between Edinburgh and Leith. It has been shown that for a period of about three hundred years down to the year 1833 Leith had little or no say in the management of its own affairs, that management resting almost wholly with the Town Council of Edinburgh. The position with regard to the state of municipal government in Leith in the early years of last century may be gathered from the following statement which refers to the year 1827 :—

First, the harbour, quay, most of the streets of Leith, its closes, bourses, etc., and also the King's Wark were within the royalty of the City of Edinburgh.

Second, North Leith was a portion of the Burgh of Regality of Canongate, the bailies of which were annually appointed by the magistrates of Edinburgh. The Canongate court-house was situated nearly two miles distant from the nearest point of North Leith, and for all practical purposes the inhabitants might have been said to be without a municipal government at all.

Third, South Leith was a burgh of barony under

the superiority of the Council of Edinburgh. Its boundaries were so uncertain that the magistrates could not tell their own territory.

Fourth, with respect to the Citadel, its bailies were the same persons as those appointed by the city of Edinburgh to act as bailies of South Leith, but no court was ever held in the Citadel.

Fifth, the bailie of St. Anthony was appointed by the minister, elders, and others of South Leith.

Sixth, a great extent, probably much more than the half of the whole town, was totally unprovided with any municipal government whatever.

The Leith people complained bitterly of a large portion of the town being unprovided with any local magistracy, and of the fact that, where there were bailies, the government of each was separate from and independent of the others. Owing to the uncertainty of the boundaries of the various divisions no one could tell before which bailie any particular cause or complaint should be brought.

With respect to the town's affairs, the cry of the citizens of the Port was equally loud. The streets were ill-paved and worse lighted. The people of the better class had oil lamps over their gates. The iron standards of some of these lamps yet remain as part of the railing enclosing the houses in Charlotte Street and James Place. In these iron standards may still be seen the link-horns for extinguishing the links or torches people carried with them to light their way through the streets when they went abroad after dark. Upwards of fifty lives were lost in four years for the want of a few chains and lamps around the docks. There were no police whatever in the docks and warehouses, and goods were stolen from the vessels and quays. The water





LAMP WITH LINK  
EXTINGUISHER, JAMES PLACE.

supply was scanty in quantity and bad in quality, for it came from Lochend, as it does still to the docks, and was first brought in in 1754. The old waterhouse still stands by the lochside.

In justice to the bailies it must be said that it was entirely beyond their means to provide adequate supplies of public water to take the place of private wells, broad and safe roadways, well-lit and well-paved streets, efficient police, and all the other benefits to which we are so accustomed to-day. They had very little power to raise money by the imposition of rates, their revenue being comparatively small, and coming from such indirect sources as feu-duties, customs on trade, harbour dues, and fines inflicted in court. They had no funds for the numerous services provided by the local government of our own day.

Be that as it may, the people of Leith saw that they could not hope that their evils would be cured, or inestimable further advantages obtained, until they were governed by

a body more or less representative of the people. There are three chief dates in this part of Leith's struggle for a better system of government.

In 1827 an Act was passed by Parliament providing for the municipal government of the town of Leith and for the due administration of justice. By this Act provision was made for the watching, paving, cleansing, and lighting of Leith, the boundaries of which were clearly defined. The magistrates of Leith, three in number, were to be annually chosen by the Town Council of Edinburgh from a leet or list of nine presented by the retiring bailies. By this means Leith could generally obtain the magistrates it wished, for the Edinburgh Council usually chose the persons most favoured by Leith.

In 1833 the Burgh Reform Act was passed, under which Leith was made a Parliamentary Burgh, being associated with Portobello and Musselburgh in the return of one member to Parliament. In our own day Leith has its own member of Parliament, Portobello and Musselburgh being no longer joined with it for parliamentary purposes.

In 1833 Leith was created a Municipal Burgh, with its own provost, magistrates, and council. On November 1, 1833, came the end of an "auld sang." The day of the bailies of Leith was over. Leith had come into its own. Looking back on these times almost a hundred years ago, we can see that the new order of things did not possibly cause much surprise either in Edinburgh or in Leith, so natural had been the stages towards it.

### *1833-1920.*

When Leith at last obtained its own Town Council, the right of electing the councillors lay with such of

the citizens of Leith as were qualified to vote for a member of Parliament, the town being divided into wards for the purposes of the election. The first Town Council, which consisted of sixteen members, met on the 12th of November 1833, and elected a provost, four bailies, and a treasurer. One of the first acts of the newly constituted council was to present an address to King



TOWN HALL, CHARLOTTE STREET.

William IV., rejoicing in the liberty which the Government had conferred upon the inhabitants of Leith, and assuring his Majesty that the provost, magistrates, and council of the town would use their most zealous endeavours to suppress crime, to reclaim the vicious, to instruct the ignorant, and to give encouragement to every measure tending to promote the interests of the people over whom they had been chosen to preside.

The council unanimously elected Adam White to

be the first provost of the town. Mr. White was one of Leith's merchants, his firm, of which he was the founder, doing a large business in the importing of Baltic produce. Mr. White, who had carved out his own fortune in life, was much esteemed and respected in Leith, and had considerable influence in the council over which he presided. He was a lifelong friend of Sir John Gladstone, the father of the great premier, and a generous benefactor to the poor of North Leith.

The history of the town in the new era of its local government has been one of rapid development and progress. Improvements in, and addition after addition to the docks, have kept pace with the demand for increased shipping facilities. Both town and docks are now efficiently policed, and the streets are well paved and kept in an admirable state of cleanliness. The electric lighting of the town and its electric car system are of the most up-to-date kind. A glance at the list of officials who were employed by the Town Council gives some idea of its varied activities. Here is the list : town clerk, chief constable, medical officer of health, burgh engineer, sanitary inspector, public analyst, electrical engineer, road surveyor, inspector of lighting and cleaning, tramways manager, superintendent of parks, firemaster, superintendent of slaughter-houses, and inspector of weights and measures.

A good deal of the work relating to the health, comfort, and prosperity of the people of Leith was carried on by the Town Council through various bodies on which its representatives acted conjointly with representatives of Edinburgh Town Council. Four of these bodies are particularly worthy of attention :—

(1) The Dock Commission has charge of all matters relating to the management of the docks.

(2) The Gas Commission looked after the gas supply of Edinburgh and Leith, as manufactured at the Commissioners' works at Granton.

(3) The Water Trust gave us the adequate supply of water, unsurpassed in purity, which we enjoy to-day. This water comes from reservoirs among the Pentlands and the Moorfoots. The Talla Reservoir, the latest and greatest of them all, is over two miles in length. Bailie Archibald, a Leith magistrate, is remembered in the Port as the man before all others to whom our splendid water supply is due.

(4) The Water of Leith Commission carried out a drainage scheme on a very large scale. No sewage or refuse from paper mills or other works is now allowed to run into the Water of Leith, which, as a consequence, is once more a clear flowing stream. Leith has benefited enormously in health from the purification scheme.

One of the largest schemes, and at the same time one of the most beneficial from a sanitary point of view, ever carried through by the Leith Town Council was the Improvement Scheme. Begun in 1881, the scheme swept away the greater part of the slums of Leith. Narrow, crowded, dark, fetid closes, with houses hopelessly insanitary, were demolished, and Henderson Street formed with its open spaces. The result has been a great advance in public health.

At this point in our Story of Leith we take leave of Leith Town Council, which has now passed out of existence after a lifetime of eighty-seven years. In 1920 an Act was passed by Parliament providing for the amalgamation of Edinburgh, Leith, and other districts, so that Leith to-day forms a part of what has been called Greater Edinburgh, to the Town Council of which she returns twelve representatives. It is to be noted that



among other stipulations the Act provides for our town retaining the name with which so much history and so many traditions are connected—the name of the Port of Leith.

*Poor Law Administration.*

From the Reformation till 1845 the relief of the poor depended mainly on kirk sessions, the money coming from church collections, gifts from parishioners, and fines imposed by the sessions. The following extracts from the records of South Leith Church show the manner of treatment of the poor in the seventeenth century:—

“ 22 Jany. 1685.—The Session ordained a groat per week to be given to a poor child in Caldtoun (that is, the Calton, which then as now formed part of South Leith parish) who is fatherless and motherless and hath nothing qrby to be sustained or kepted from starvation.

“ 15 Mch. 1691.—To Marjory Cruden who fell over the Shore among the ships anchors and was sore hurt, 14s.”

As the money mentioned is Scots money, and as 14s. in 1691 would represent 1s. 2d. nowadays, it cannot be said that the treatment of the poor in those times was of too extravagant a nature. As a matter of fact, kirk sessions had sometimes very little in hand to disburse in the form of charity.

In 1845 the Poor Law Act was passed under which two Parochial Boards—one for South Leith and the other for North Leith—were set up, each consisting of so many members nominated by the kirk session and so many elected by the ratepayers, and to these bodies the kirk sessions handed over the care of the poor. These Parochial Boards each built its own poorhouse, that of South Leith being erected in 1850, and that of North

Leith in 1863. These two institutions have now been superseded by the large and modern poorhouse at Seafield.

In 1895 one Parish Council for the whole of Leith took the place of the two Parochial Boards, the members of the council being elected entirely by the ratepayers. The Parish Council not only looked after the poor, but performed several other duties as well. It levied the poor and education rates, attended to the registration of births, marriages, and deaths, and so on.

When the corporations of Edinburgh and Leith were amalgamated in 1920 the Parish Councils were also united, Leith returning eight of the forty-six councillors who comprise the Edinburgh Parish Council.

#### *The Administration of Education.*

From the Reformation down to the beginning of the nineteenth century the kirk session of South Leith was the education authority of the town, maintaining two schools—a grammar school for higher education and a school for the poor where the children were taught to read the Scriptures. In 1806 the grammar school was transferred from the Kirkgate (where the accommodation had left a great deal to be desired) to the Links, where a new school, the High School, had been erected, the necessary money having been raised by subscription among the citizens of the town. In 1848 the “High School Trust” was vested in the magistrates and council of Leith, along with the two ministers of South Leith. This Trust managed the school until 1872.

In that year the Scottish Education Act was passed, setting up in each burgh or parish a School Board, with

power to impose rates for the upkeep of the schools. The first meeting of the Leith School Board was held on April 22, 1873, its chairman being James Watt, provost of Leith. Mr. Watt held the position of chairman until his death in 1881. It was to this body that the High School was handed over. The School Board continued



OLD HIGH SCHOOL.

to control education in Leith until 1919, when their powers passed to a new body, set up by the new Education Act of 1918, and called the Education Authority.

Here it may be said that while the Act of 1918 set up county authorities to take the place of parish authorities, and thus made great changes in educational affairs in Scotland, the passing of the Act made very little change in Leith, which was one of five burghs

that did not come under the county authority, but were allowed to form separate education areas.

The number of schools continued to increase in Leith from 1872 onwards, and so we find that in 1919, when the Leith School Board handed over its schools to the newly constituted Education Authority, these schools numbered no fewer than eighteen, exclusive of three special schools—one in North Junction Street, for mentally defective scholars; one at Clarebank, for pupils whose health required special attention; and the third at Ceres, Cupar Fife, for Leith children likely to be benefited in health by a stay in the country. Of the eighteen schools, one—Holy Cross Academy—is an Intermediate School providing a three years' curriculum in languages, mathematics, science, art, and other subjects; while two—Leith Academy and Trinity Academy—are Secondary Schools, providing a six years' course for the Leaving Certificate, the passport to the University. Leith Academy, under a changed name, is that High School whose fortunes until 1872 have already been sketched, the School Board making the change of name in 1888. The old building continued to exist under its new name until 1896, when it was demolished, having become altogether inadequate to meet modern requirements, and the present-day building erected on its site.

The Leith Education Authority had a short-lived existence. Just as the Amalgamation Act had combined the Town Councils of Edinburgh and Leith, and also their Parish Councils, so also it combined their Education Authorities. The Education Authority of Greater Edinburgh consists of thirty-four members, seven of whom are Leith representatives.

And now with the amalgamation of the two communities the story of Leith as a separate municipality

comes to an end. The people of Leith had no wish to see their town lose its identity as a separate burgh, and on a plebiscite being taken showed by a vote of 26,810 to 4,340 that they did not wish amalgamation. But the union of 1920 is very different from that of the old unhappy days before 1833. The relation of Leith to Edinburgh then was one of serf to overlord. In this later union of 1920 Leith joins Edinburgh on equal terms, and will co-operate with her for the good of the joint community with no less zeal than she worked for her own welfare when a separate burgh.

#### LEITH'S HONOURABLE RECORD IN THE GREAT WAR.

The inhabitants of Leith have always been distinguished for devoted loyalty in the cause of king and country, and in times of national danger, as our story shows, have ever been foremost in rallying to their defence. The Leith men of our own times have shown themselves no less patriotic than those of older days. A sculptured portrait panel on Queen Victoria's statue facing Leith Walk reminds us of the part the Leith Territorials played in the South African War of 1899-1902. We have already seen in the story of the gallant fight of the *Coblenz* with an enemy submarine that the heroic spirit which animated Leith mariners in the brave days of old inspired the sailormen of the Port all through the Great War. It was in the same spirit and with the same dauntless courage that Leith's own battalion, the 7th Royal Scots, went forth in defence of home and fatherland. Leith, too, had a special interest in General Haig, the Commander-in-Chief of our armies, for his mother, Rachel Veitch, and her only sister Dorothea were townswomen of our own. Their father, Hugh Veitch,



was town clerk of Leith and lived at Stewartfield, a house that formerly stood near Bonnington Toll, and was owned originally by a family of Stewart who lived here in the eighteenth century. Its garden wall still bounds Newhaven Road from the Toll to Bonnington Mill.

No other testimony is needed to show the noble spirit



STEWARTFIELD.

of patriotism that animated Leith all through the years of the Great War than the fact that out of a population of 84,000 no fewer than 14,000, or exactly one-sixth of the total inhabitants, enrolled for service. That record can hardly be excelled by any other town. Of the number who rallied to the flag in their country's hour of need, 2,205 made the supreme sacrifice. There were 320 honours gained. Two Leith men—Lieutenant

Allan E. Ker, and Sapper Adam Archibald—won the V.C., while five others gained the D.S.O.

The war was brought into the very midst of the town on Sunday night, April 2, 1916, when it was bombed by enemy zeppelins. But no incident throughout the whole war stirred the heart of Leith so deeply as the cruel fate that overtook its own battalion, the 7th Royal Scots, at Gretna on Saturday, May 22, 1915, while on its way to join the fighting line. In that terrible



THE GREYNA DISASTER. THE FUNERAL PROCESSION PASSING PILRIG.  
(Photo, *Edinburgh Evening News*.)

disaster 214 officers and men were killed, and only some sixty out of nearly 500 were able to answer the roll-call. The whole town was stricken with grief, and sore did she mourn her fallen sons. Their remembrance can never die. As often as the anniversary of the disaster comes round so often will Leith gather before the memorial erected to their memory to pay her tribute to the heroic dead.

“Towards crimson fields and trenches deep  
They journeyed on,  
Till Fate decreed that they should sleep  
Much nearer home.  
But though their couch be far removed  
From scenes of strife,  
Still to the land they dearly loved  
Each gave his life.  
For in the will, not in the deed,  
True courage lies ;  
And all had owned their country's need—  
Great sacrifice ! ”

EDEN PHILLPOTTS.



GRETNA MEMORIAL, ROSEBANK CEMETERY.

## CHRONOLOGY OF LEITH'S HISTORY.

A.D.

- 80. Agricola marches through the Leith district from Inveresk.
- 208. The Emperor Severus encamps at Cramond.
- 211. The Romans finally leave the Leith district.
- 1128. David I. founds the Abbey of Holyrood.
- 1296. The Abbot of Holyrood, Sir John de Lestalric, and the Parson of Restalrig swear fealty to Edward I.
- 1296-1314. { An English garrison occupies Leith.
- 1314. Randolph captures Edinburgh Castle. The English evacuate Leith.
- 1314. Edward II. camps at Leith on the way to Bannockburn.
- 1329. Bruce's Charter to the Burgesses of Edinburgh.
- 1335. The English rebuild Edinburgh Castle and occupy Leith.
- 1341. An expedition from Leith recaptures Edinburgh Castle.
- 1382. The Logans become Barons of Restalrig.
- 1398, 1414. { Logan grants two Charters to the Burgesses of Edinburgh.
- 1430. Sir Robert Logan founds the Preceptory of St. Anthony.
- 1434 (c.). James I. builds the King's Wark.
- 1439. William Logan founds the Logan family of Coatfield.
- 1475 (c.). Sir James Logan heirs the lands of Sheriff Brae.
- 1476. John Barton and the *Juliana* captured by the Portuguese.
- 1483 (c.). St. Mary's (South Leith) Church founded.
- 1486. Abbot Ballantyne builds his bridge of "three stonern arches."
- 1489. Sir Andrew Wood defeats the English off Dunbar.
- 1490. Sir Andrew Wood defeats and captures Sir Stephen Bull.
- 1493. Abbot Ballantyne builds St. Ninian's Church.
- 1504. James IV. founds Newhaven.
- 1505. The *Margaret* launched at Leith.
- 1510. Edinburgh purchases Newhaven from James IV.
- 1511. The *Great Michael* launched at Newhaven.
- 1513. James IV. and the Laird and the Dean of Restalrig slain at Flodden.
- 1544. Hertford sacks Edinburgh and Leith.
- 1546. George Wishart preaches in Leith.
- 1547. Battle of Pinkie and second burning of Leith.
- 1555. The Mariners' Hospital founded and dedicated to the Holy Trinity.
- 1559-60. Siege of Leith. Giant's and Lady Fife's Braes raised.
- 1560. Treaty of Edinburgh. The French leave Leith.
- 1561. Queen Mary arrives in Leith from France.
- 1567. Edinburgh acquires the Superiority of Leith.
- 1571-73. Morton and the King's men occupy Leith.
- 1588. The alarm of the Spanish Armada.
- 1593. Trials and executions for witchcraft.

A.D.

- 1600 (c.). Craigentinny House built by the Nisbets.  
 1604. The Lords Balmerino become owners of Restalrig.  
 1606. North Leith erected into a parish.  
 1609. South Leith erected into a parish.  
 1609. Forfeiture of the Logans of Restalrig.  
 1631. Balmerino House built.  
 1638. National Covenant sworn to in St. Mary's and St. Ninian's.  
 1639. Edinburgh purchases the Superiority of North Leith.  
 1643. The Solemn League and Covenant sworn to in Leith.  
 1645. The Great Plague.  
 1645. Edinburgh purchases the King's Wark.  
 1650. Leslie defends Leith and Edinburgh against Cromwell.  
 1650. Battle of Dunbar. Cromwell's Ironsides occupy Leith.  
 1656. Citadel built. St. Nicholas' Hospital demolished.  
 1675. Conventicle at Leith Mills.  
 1685. Robert Mylne enlarges Harbour and builds Signal Tower.  
 1685. Declaration of Indulgence. The Meeting-house opened.  
 1698. The Darien Expedition sails from Leith Roads.  
 1704. Captain Green of the *Worcester* hanged on Leith Sands.  
 1707. The Union greatly injures Leith's trade.  
 1715. Brigadier Mackintosh occupies the Citadel.  
 1718. The Balfours purchase the lands of Pilrig.  
 1724. Edinburgh purchases the Calton and Yardheads from Lord Balmerino.  
 1734. Leith Trade Incorporations.  
 1746. Execution of Lord Balmerino.  
 ———. Flora Macdonald in Leith Roads.  
 1751. Turnpike Road 'Act. Bonnington Toll erected.  
 1754. Leith gets her water supply from Lochend.  
 1755. Edinburgh's trade monopoly ends.  
 1779. The Paul Jones scare. Leith Fort erected.  
 1788. Abbot Ballantyne's bridge demolished. Tolbooth Wynd draw-bridge constructed.  
 1806. The Old Dock opened. (The Queen's, 1817; the Victoria, 1852; the Albert, 1869; the Edinburgh, 1881; the Imperial, 1904.)  
 1809. The Martello Tower built.  
 1816. North Leith Church, Madeira Street, and Trinity House erected.  
 1821. Chain Pier constructed.  
 1822. George IV. lands in Leith.  
 1826. The Docks put under the control of the Dock Commission.  
 1827. Town Hall, Charlotte Street, built.  
 1833. The Burgh Reform Act makes Leith a parliamentary burgh.  
 1848. Edinburgh, Leith, and Granton Railway opened.  
 1848. The Newhaven ferry-boats transferred to Granton.  
 1880. The Improvement Scheme. Many ancient houses demolished.  
 1915. The Gretna disaster.  
 1916. Zeppelin raid on Leith.  
 1920. Leith amalgamated with Edinburgh.



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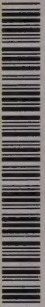
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